Biographies of the Companions (Sahaabah)

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The Sahaabah were the companions of Prophet Muhammad (saas). They are described in glowing terms by the Prophet (saas) as the following hadith from Sahih Muslim shows:

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> **Narrated Aisha:**
> **A person asked Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) as to who amongst the people were the best. He said: Of the generation to which I belong, then of the second generation (generation adjacent to my generation), then of the third generation (generation adjacent to the second generation).**

Below is a partial list of some of the companions of the Prophet (saas). Their lives remain a source of inspiration for the later generations of Muslims, including today's. May Allah be pleased with all of them.

Abbad Ibn Bishr

It was the fourth year after the Hijrah. The city of the Prophet was still under threat from within and without. From within. the influential Jewish tribe. the Banu anNadir. broke their agreement with the Prophet and made plans to kill him. For this, they were banished from the city. This was in the month of Safar.

Two months of uneasy quiet passed. Then the Prophet received news that tribes from distant Najd were planning an attack. To pre-empt them. the Prophet gathered a force of over four hundred men. and leaving one of his companions Uthman ibn Affan. in charge of the city, set out eastwards. Among this force was the young Madinan, Abbad ibn Bishr.

Arriving at Najd, the Prophet found the habitations of the hostile tribes strangely deserted of men. Only women were about. The men had taken to the hills. Some of them regrouped and prepared to fight. The time of Salat al-Asr (the afternoon prayer) came. The Prophet feared that the hostile tribesmen would attack them during prayer. He arranged the Muslims in ranks and divided them into two groups and performed the prayer as the Salat al-Khawf (the Prayer of Fear). With one group he performed one rakah wh ile the other group stood on guard. For the second rakah the groups changed places. Each group completed its prayer with one rakah after the Prophet had finished...

On beholding the disciplined ranks of the Muslims the hostile tribesmen became uneasy and afraid. The Prophet had made his presence felt and something of his mission was now known at first hand in the central highlands of Arabia whence he departed peacefu lly.

On the way back, the Prophet pitched camp in a valley for a night. As soon as the Muslims had settled their camel mounts, the Prophet peace be on him, asked: "Who will be our guard tonight?" "We, O Messenger of God," said Abbad ibn Bishr and Ammar ibn Yas ir both of whom had been paired off as 'brothers' by the Prophet when he arrived in Madinah after the Hijrah.

Abbad and Ammar left for the mouth of the valley to take up duty. Abbad saw that his "brother" was tired and asked him: "What part of the night do you wish to sleep, the first or the second?" "I shall sleep during the first part," said Ammar who was soon fast asleep quite close to Abbad.

The night was clear, calm and peaceful. The stars, the trees, and the rocks all appeared to celebrate in silence the praises of their Lord. Abbad felt serene. There was no movement, no threatening sign. Why not spend the time in ibadah (worship) and recit ing the Quran? How delightful it would be to combine the performance of Salat with the measured recitation of the Quran which he so much enjoyed.

In fact Abbad was enthralled by the Quran from the moment he first heard it being recited by the mellow and beautiful voice of Musab ibn Umayr. That was before the Hijrah when Abbad was just about fifteen years old. The Quran had found a special place in his heart and day and night thereafter he would be heard repeating the glorious words of God so much so that he became known among the Prophet's companions as the "friend of the Quran".

Late at night, the Prophet once stood up to perform the Tahajjud Prayer in Aishah's house which

adjoined the masjid. He heard a voice reciting the Quran, pure and sweet and as fresh as when the angel Jibril revealed the words to him. He asked: "Aishah, is that the voice of Abbad ibn Bishr?" "Yes, O Messenger of God," replied Aishah. "O Lord, forgive him," prayed the Prophet out of love for him.

And so in the stillness of the night, at the mouth of the valley in Najd, Abbad stood up and faced the Qiblah. Raising his hand in surrender to God, he entered into the state of Prayer. Finishing the compulsory opening chapter of the Quran, he began recit ing Surah al-Kahf in his sweet, captivating voice. Surah al-Kahf is a long Surah of one hundred and ten verses which deals in part with the virtues of faith, truth and patience and with the relativity of time.

While he was thus absorbed in reciting and reflecting upon the divine words, eternal words of illumination and wisdom, a stranger stalked the outskirts of the valley in search of Muhammad and his followers. He was one of those who had planned to attack th e Prophet but who had fled into the mountains on the approach of the MusIims. His wife whom he had left in the village had been taken as a hostage by one of the Muslims. When he eventually found that his wife was gone, he swore by al-Lat and al-Uzzah that he would pursue Muhammad and his companions and that he would not return unless he had drawn blood.

From a distance, the man saw the figure of Abbad silhouetted at the mouth of the valley and he knew that the Prophet and his followers must be inside the valley. Silently he drew his bow and let fly an arrow. Unerringly it embedded itself in Abbad's flesh .

Calmly, Abbad pulled out the arrow from his body and went on with his recitation, still absorbed in his Salat. The attacker shot a second and a third arrow both of which also found their mark. Abbad pulled out one and then the other. He finished his recit ation, made ruku and then sujud. Weak and in pain, he stretched out his right hand while still in prostration and shook his sleeping companion. Ammar awoke. Silently, Abbad continued the Salat to its end and then said: "Get up and stand guard in my place. I have been wounded."

Ammar jumped up and began to yell. Seeing them both the attacker fled into the darkness. Ammar turned to Abbad as he lay on the ground, blood flowing from his wounds.

"Ya Subhanallah (Glory be to God)! Why didn't you wake me when you were hit by the first arrow?" "I was in the midst of reciting verses of the Quran which filled my soul with awe and I did not want to cut short the recitation. The Prophet had commanded me to commit this surah to memory. Death would have been dearer to me than that the recitation of this surah should be interrupted."

Abbad's devotion to the Quran was a sign of his intense devotion to and love for God, His Prophet and His religion. The qualities he was known for were his constant immersion in ibadah, his heroic courage and his generosity in the path of God. At times of sacrifice and death, he would always be in the front line. When it was time for receiving his share of rewards, he would only be found after much effort and difficulty. He was always trustworthy in his dealings with the wealth of Muslims. Ali this was re cognized. Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, once said: "There are three persons among the Ansar whom no one could excel in virtue: Sad ibn Muadh, Usayd ibn Khudayr and Abbad ibn Bishr."

Abbad died the death of a shahid (martyr) at the battle of Yamamah. Just before the battle he had a strong presentiment of death and martyrdom. He noticed that there was a lack of mutual confidence among the Muhajirin and Ansar. He was grieved and upset. He realized that there would be no success for the Muslims in these terrible battles unless the Muhajirin and Ansar were grouped in separate regiments so that it could be clearly seen who really bore their responsibility and who were truly

steadfast in co mbat.

At the break of day when the battle commenced, Abbad ibn Bishr stood on a mound and shouted:

"O Ansar, distinguish yourselves among men. Destroy your scabbards. And do not forsake Islam."

Abbad harangued the Ansar until about four hundred men gathered around him at the head of whom were Thabit ibn Qays, al-Baraa ibn Malik and Abu Dujanah, the keeper of the Prophet's sword. With this force, Abbad unleashed an offensive into the enemy's rank s which blunted their thrust and drove them back to the "garden of death".

At the walls of this garden, Abbad ibn Bishr fell. So numerous were his wounds, he was hardly recognizable. He had lived, fought and died as a believer.

Abdullah ibn Abbas

Abdullah was the son of Abbas, an uncle of the noble Prophet. He was born just three years before the Hijrah. When the Prophet died, Abdullah was thus only thirteen years old.

When he was born, his mother took him to the blessed Prophet who put some of his saliva on the babe's tongue even before he began to suckle. This was the beginning of the close and intimate tie between Abbas and the Prophet that was to be part of a life-long love and devotion.

When Abdullah reached the age of discretion, he attached himself to the service of the Prophet. He would run to fetch water for him when he wanted to make wudu. During Salat, he would stand behind the Prophet in prayer and when the Prophet went on journeys or expeditions, he would follow next in line to him. Abdullah thus became like the shadow of the Prophet, constantly in his company.

In all these situations he was attentive and alert to whatever the Prophet did and said. His heart was enthusiastic and his young mind was pure and uncluttered, committing the Prophet's words to memory with the capacity and accuracy of a recording instrument. In this way and through his constant researches later, as we shall see, Abdullah became one of the most learned companions of the Prophet, preserving on behalf of later generations of Muslims, the priceless words of the Messenger of God. It is said that he committed to memory about one thousand, six hundred and sixty sayings of the Prophet which are recorded and authenticated in the collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The Prophet would often draw Abdullah as a child close to him, pat him on the shoulder and pray: "O Lord, make him acquire a deep understanding of the religion of Islam and instruct him in the meaning and interpretation of things."

There were many occasions thereafter when the blessed Prophet would repeat this dua or prayer for his cousin and before long Abdullah ibn Abbas realized that his life was to be devoted to the pursuit of learning and knowledge.

The Prophet moreover prayed that he be granted not just knowledge and understanding but wisdom. Abdullah related the following incident about himself: "Once the Prophet, peace be upon him, was on the point of performing wudu. I hurried to get water ready for him. He was pleased with what I was doing. As he was about to begin Salat, he indicated that I should stand at his side. However, I stood behind him. When the Salat was finished, he turned to me and said: 'What prevented you from being at my side, O Abdullah?' 'You are too illustrious and too great in my eyes for me to stand side by side with you,' I replied.

Raising his hands to the heavens, the Prophet then prayed: 'O Lord, grant him wisdom." The Prophet's prayer undoubtedly was granted for the young Abdullah was to prove time and again that he possessed a wisdom beyond his years. But it was a wisdom that came only with devotion and the dogged pursuit of knowledge both during the Prophet's lifetime and after his death.

During the lifetime of the Prophet, Abdullah would not miss any of his assemblies and he would commit to memory whatever he said. After the Prophet passed away, he would take care to go to as many

companions as possible especially those who knew the Prophet longer and learn from them what the Prophet had taught them. Whenever he heard that someone knew a hadith of the Prophet which he did not know he would go quickly to him and record it. He would subject whatever he heard to close scrutiny and check it against other reports. He would go to as many as thirty companions to verify a single matter.

Abdullah described what he once did on hearing that a companion of the Prophet knew a hadith unknown to him: "I went to him during the time of the afternoon siesta and spread my cloak in front of his door. The wind blew dust on me (as I sat waiting for him). If I wished I could have sought his permission to enter and he would certainly have given me permission. But I preferred to wait on him so that he could be completely refreshed. Coming out of his house and seeing me in that condition he said: 'O cousin of the Prophet! What's the matter with you? If you had sent for me I would have come to you.' 'I am the one who should come to you, for knowledge is sought, it does not just come,' I said. I asked him about the hadith and learnt from him."

In this way, the dedicated Abdullah would ask, and ask, and go on asking. And he would sift and scrutinize the information he had collected with his keen and meticulous mind.

It was not only in the collection of hadith that Abdullah specialized. He devoted himself to acquiring knowledge in a wide variety of fields. He had a special admiration for persons like Zayd ibn Thabit, the recorder of the revelation, the leading judge and jurist consult in Madinah, an expert in the laws of inheritance and in reading the Quran. When Zayd intended to go on a trip, the young Abdullah would stand humbly at his side and taking hold of the reins of his mount would adopt the attitude of a humble servant in the presence of his master. Zayd would say to him: "Don't, O cousin of the Prophet."

"Thus we were commanded to treat the learned ones among us," Abdullah would say. "And Zayd would say to him in turn: "Let me see your hand." Abdullah would stretch out his hand. Zayd, taking it, would kiss it and say: "Thus we were commanded to treat the ahl al-bayt members of the household of the Prophet."

As Abdullah's knowledge grew, he grew in stature. Masruq ibn al Ajda said of him: "Whenever I saw Ibn Abbas, I would say: He is the most handsome of men. When he spoke, I would say: He is the most eloquent of men. And when he held a conversation, I would say: He is the most knowledgeable of men."

The Khalifah Umar ibn al-Khattab often sought his advice on important matters of state and described him as "the young man of maturity".

Sad ibn abi Waqqas described him with these words: "I have never seen someone who was quicker in understanding, who had more knowledge and greater wisdom than Ibn Abbas. I have seen Umar summon him to discuss difficult problems in the presence of veterans of Badr from among the Muhajirin and Ansar. Ibn Abbas would speak and Umar would not disregard what he had to say."

It is these qualities which resulted in Abdullah ibn Abbas being known as "the learned man of this Ummah".

Abdullah ibn Abbas was not content to accumulate knowledge. He felt he had a duty to the ummah to educate those in search of knowledge and the general masses of the Muslim community. He turned to teaching and his house became a university - yes, a university in the full sense of the word, a university

with specialized teaching but with the difference that there was only one teacher Abdullah ibn Abbas.

There was an enthusiastic response to Abdullah's classes. One of his companions described a typical scene in front of his house: "I saw people converging on the roads leading to his house until there was hardly any room in front of his house. I went in and told him about the crowds of people at his door and he said: 'Get me water for wudu.'

He performed wudu and, seating himself, said: 'Go out and say to them: Whoever wants to ask about the Quran and its letters (pronunciation) let him enter.'

This I did and people entered until the house was filled. Whatever he was asked, Abdullah was able to elucidate and even provide additional information to what was asked. Then (to his students) he said: 'Make way for your brothers.'

Then to me he said: 'Go out and say: Who wants to ask about the Quran and its interpretation, let him enter'.

Again the house was filled and Abdullah elucidated and provided more information than what was requested."

And so it continued with groups of people coming in to discuss fiqh (jurisprudence), halal and haram (the lawful and the prohibited in Islam), inheritance laws, Arabic language, poetry and etymology.

To avoid congestion with many groups of people coming to discuss various subjects on a single day, Abdullah decided to devote one day exclusively for a particular discipline. On one day, only the exegesis of the Quran would be taught while on another day only fiqh (jurisprudence). The maghazi or campaigns of the Prophet, poetry, Arab history before Islam were each allocated a special day.

Abdullah ibn Abbas brought to his teaching a powerful memory and a formidable intellect. His explanations were precise, clear and logical. His arguments were persuasive and supported by pertinent textual evidence and historical facts.

One occasion when his formidable powers of persuasion was used was during the caliphate of Ali. A large number of supporters of Ali in his stand against Muawiyah had just deserted him. Abdullah ibn Abbas went to Ali and requested permission to speak to them. Ali hesitated fearing that Abdullah would be in danger at their hands but eventually gave way on Abdullah's optimism that nothing untoward would happen.

Abdullah went over to the group. They were absorbed in worship. Some were not willing to let him speak but others were prepared to give him a hearing.

"Tell me" asked Abdullah, "what grievances have you against the cousin of the Prophet, the husband of his daughter and the first of those who believed in him?"

"The men proceeded to relate three main complaints against Ali. First, that he appointed men to pass judgment in matters pertaining to the religion of God - meaning that Ali had agreed to accept the arbitration of Abu Musa al-Asbari and Amr ibn al-As in the dispute with Muawiyah. Secondly, that he fought and did not take booty nor prisoners of war. Thirdly, that he did not insist on the title of Amir al-Muminin during the arbitration process although the Muslims had pledged allegiance to him and he was their legitimate amir. To them this was obviously a sign of weakness and a sign that Ali was prepared to

bring his legitimate position as Amir al-Muminin into disrepute.

In reply, Abdullah asked them that should he cite verses from the Quran and sayings of the Prophet to which they had no objection and which related to their criticisms, would they be prepared to change their position. They replied that they would and Abdullah proceeded: "Regarding your statement that Ali has appointed men to pass judgment in matters pertaining to Allah's religion, Allah Glorified and Exalted is He, says: 'O you who believe! Kill not game while in the sacred precincts or in pilgrim garb. If any of you do so intentionally, the compensation is an offering, of a domestic animal equivalent to the one he killed and adjudged by two just men among." "I adjure you, by God! Is the adjudication by men in matters pertaining to the preservation of their blood and their lives and making peace between them more deserving of attention than adjudication over a rabbit whose value is only a quarter of a dirham?"

Their reply was of course that arbitration was more important in the case of preserving Muslim lives and making peace among them than over the killing of game in the sacred precincts for which Allah sanctioned arbitration by men.

"Have we then finished with this point?" asked Abdullah and their reply was: "Allahumma, naam - O Lord, yes!" Abdullah went on: "As for your statement that Ali fought and did not take prisoners of war as the Prophet did, do you really desire to take your "mother" Aishah as a captive and treat her as fair game in the way that captives are treated? If your answer is "Yes", then you have fallen into kufr (disbelief). And if you say that she is not your "mother", you would also have fallen into a state of kufr for Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, has said: 'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are their mothers (entitled to respect and consideration).' (The Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, 34:6).

"Choose for yourself what you want," said Abdullah and then he asked: "Have we then finished with this point?" and this time too their reply was: "Allahumma, naam - O Lord, yes!" Abdullah went on: "As for your statement that Ali has surrendered the title of Amir al-Muminin, (remember) that the Prophet himself, peace and blessings of God be on him, at the time of Hudaybiyyah, demanded that the mushrikin write in the truce which he concluded with them: 'This is what the Messenger of God has agreed...' and they retorted: 'If we believed that you were the Messenger of God we would not have blocked your way to the Kabah nor would we have fought you. Write instead: 'Muhammad the son of Abdullah.' The Prophet conceded their demand while saying: 'By God, I am the Messenger of God even if they reject me." At this point Abdullah ibn Abbas asked the dissidents: "Have we then finished with this point? and their reply was once again:

"Allahumma, naam - O Lord, yes!"

One of the fruits of this verbal challenge in which Abdullah displayed his intimate knowledge of the Quran and the sirah of the Prophet as well as his remarkable powers of argument and persuasion, was that the majority, about twenty thousand men, returned to the ranks of Ali. About four thousand however remained obdurate. These latter came to be known as Kharijites.

On this and other occasions, the courageous Abdullah showed that he preferred peace above war, and logic against force and violence. However, he was not only known for his courage, his perceptive thought and his vast knowledge. He was also known for his great generosity and hospitality. Some of his contemporaries said of his household: "We have not seen a house which has more food or drink or fruit or knowledge than the house of Ibn Abbas."

He had a genuine and abiding concern for people. He was thoughtful and caring. He once said: "When I

realize the importance of a verse of God's Book, I would wish that all people should know what I know.

"When I hear of a Muslim ruler who deals equitably and rules justly, I am happy on his account and I pray for him...

"When I hear of rains which fail on the land of Muslims, that fills me with happiness..."

Abdullah ibn Abbas was constant in his devotions. He kept voluntary fasts regularly and often stayed up at night in Prayer. He would weep while praying and reading the Quran. And when reciting verses dealing with death, resurrection and the life hereafter his voice would be heavy from deep sobbing.

He passed away at the age of seventy one in the mountainous city of Taif.

Abdullah Ibn Hudhafah As-Sahmi

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

History would have by-passed this man as it had by- passed thousands of Arabs before him. He, like them, would have had no claim to attention or fame. The greatness of Islam, however, gave to Abdullah ibn Hudhafah the opportunity to meet two world potentates of his timeÑKhusraw Parvez the King of Persia and Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor.

The story of his encounter with Khusraw Parvez began in the sixth year of the hijrah when the Prophet decided to send some of his Companions with letters to rulers outside the Arabian peninsula inviting them to Islam.

The Prophet attached great importance to this initiative. These messengers were going to distant lands with whom there was no agreement or treaty. They did not know the languages of these lands nor anything about the ways and disposition of their rulers. They were to invite these rulers to give up their religion and forsake their power and glory and enter the religion of a people who shortly before were almost their subjects. The mission was undoubtedly hazardous .

To make known his plan, the Prophet called his companions together and addressed them. He started by praising God and thanking Him. He then recited the Shahadah and went on:

"I want to send some of you to the rulers of foreign lands but don't dispute with me as the Israelites disputed with Jesus, the son of Mary.

"O Prophet of God, we shall carry out whatever you wish," they responded. "Send us wherever you desire."

The Prophet commissioned six of his Sahabah to carry his letters to Arab and foreign rulers. One of these was Abdullah ibn Hudhafah. He was chosen to take the Prophet's letter to Khusraw Parvez, the Persian king.

Abdullah got his camel ready and bade farewell to his wife and son. He set out, alone, and traversed mountains and valleys until he reached the land of the Persians.

He sought permission to enter into the king's presence informing the guards of the letter he was carrying. Khusraw Parvez thereupon ordered his audience chamber to be made ready and summoned his prominent aides. When they had assembled he gave permission for Abdullah to enter.

Abdullah entered and saw the Persian potentate dressed in delicate, flowing robes and wearing a great, neatly arranged turban. On Abdullah was the plain, coarse clothes of the bedouin. His head though was held high and his feet were firm. The honour of Islam burned fiercely in his breast and .he power of faith pulsated in his heart.

As soon as Khusraw Parvez saw him approaching he signalled to one of his men to take the letter from

his hand.

"No," said Abdullah. "The Prophet commanded me to hand over this letter to you directly and I shall not go against a command of the Messenger of God."

"Let him come near to me," Khusraw said to his guards and Abdullah went forward and handed over the letter. Khusraw then called an Arab clerk who originally came from Hira and ordered him to open the letter in his presence and read its contents. He began reading: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of God, to Khusraw the ruler of Persia. Peace on whoever follows the guidance . . ."

Khusraw only heard this much of the letter when the fire of anger burst within him. His face became red and he began to perspire around the neck. He snatched the letter from the clerk's hand and began tearing it to pieces without knowing what else it contained and shouted, "Does he dare to write to me like this, he who is my slave"? He was angry that the Prophet had not given him precedence in his letter. He then commanded Abdullah to be expelled from his assembly.

Abdullah was taken away, not knowing what would happen to him. Would he be killed or would he be set free? But he did not want to wait to find out. He said, "By God, I don't care what happens to me after the letter of the Prophet has been so badly treated." He managed to get to his camel and rode off.

When Khusraw's anger had subsided he commanded that Abdullah be brought before him. But Abdullah was nowhere to be found. They searched for him all the way to the Arabian peninsula but found that he had gone ahead.

Back in Madinah, Abdullah told the Prophet how Khusraw had torn his letter to pieces and the Prophet's only reply was, "May God tear up his kingdom".

Meanwhile, Khusraw wrote to Badhan, his deputy in the Yemen, to send two strong men to "that man who has appeared in the Hijaz" with orders to bring him to Persia.

Badhan despatched two of his strongest men to the Prophet and gave them a letter to him in which he was ordered to go with the two men to meet Khusraw without delay. Badhan also asked the two men to get whatever information they could on the Prophet and to study his message closely.

The men set out, moving very quickly. At Ta'if they met some Quraysh traders and asked them about Muhammad. "He is in Yathrib," they said and they went on to Makkah feeling extremely happy. This was good news for them and they went around telling other Quraysh, "You will be pleased. Khusraw is out to get Muhammad and you will be rid of his evil."

The two men meanwhile made straight for Madinah where they met the Prophet, handed him the letter of Badhan and said to him, "The king of kings, Khusraw, has written to our ruler Badhan to send his men to get you. We have come to take you with us. If you come willingly, Khusraw has said that it will be good for you and he will spare you any punishment. If you refuse, you will know the power of his punishment. He has power to destroy you and your people."

The Prophet smiled and said to them, "Go back to your mounts today and return tomorrow."

On the following day, they came to the Prophet and said to him, "Are you prepared to go with us to meet Khusraw?"

"You shall not meet Khusraw after today," replied the Prophet. "God has killed him and his son Shirwaih has taken his place on such a night and on such a month."

The two men stared in the face of the Prophet. They were completely dumbfounded.

"Do you know what you are saying?" they asked. "Shall we write about this to Badhan?"

"Yes," replied the Prophet, "and say to him that my religion has informed me about what has happened to the kingdom of Khusraw and that if he should become Muslim, I would appoint him ruler over what he now controls".

The two men returned to the Yemen and told Badhan what had happened. Badhan said, "If what Muhammad has said is true, then he is a Prophet. If not then we shall see what happens to him."

Not long afterwards, a letter from Shirwaih came to Badhan in which he said, "I killed Khusraw because of his tyranny against our people. He regarded as lawful the killing of leaders, the capturing of their women and the expropriating of their wealth. When this my letter reaches you, take the allegiance of whoever is with you on my behalf."

As soon as Badhan had read Shirwaih's letter, he threw it aside and announced his entry into Islam. The Persians with him in the Yemen also became Muslim.

That's the story of Abdullah ibn Hudhafah's meeting with the Persian king. His meeting with the Byzantine emperior took place during the caliphate of Umar ibn alKhattab. It too is an astonishing story.

In the nineteenth year after the Hijrah, Umar despatched an army to fight against the Byzantines. In it was Abdullah ibn Hudhafah. News of the Muslim force reached the Byzantine emperior. He had heard of their sincerity of faith, and their willingness to sacrifice their lives in the way of God and His Prophet. He gave orders to his men to bring to him any Muslim captive they might take alive.

God willed that Abdullah ibn Hudhafah should fall captive to the Byzantines and he was brought before the Emperor. The Emperor looked at Abdullah for a long time. Suddenly he said, "I shall make a proposal to you." "What is it?" asked Abdullah.

"I suggest that you become a Christian. If you do this, you will be set free and I shall grant you a safe refuge."

The prisoner's reaction was furious: "Death is preferable to me a thousand times to what you ask me to do."

"I see that you are a bold man. However, if you respond positively to what I propose to you, I will give you a share in my authority and swear you in as my aide."

The prisoner, shackled in his chains, smiled and said, "By God, if you give me all that you possess and all that the Arabs have in exchange for giving up the religion of Muhammad, I shall not do so."

"Then I shall kill you."

"Do what you want," answered Abdullah.

The emperor then had him put on a cross and ordered his soldiers to throw spears at him, first near his hands and then near his feet, all the while telling him to accept Christianity or at least give up his religion. This he refused over and over again to do.

The emperor then had him taken down from the wooden cross. He called for a great pot to be brought. This was filled with oil which was then heated under a fierce fire. He then had two other Muslim prisoners brought and had one of them thrown into the boiling oil. The prisoner's flesh sizzled and soon his bones could be seen. The emperor turned to Abdullah and invited him to Christianity.

This was the most terrible test that Abdullah had had to face up till now. But he remained firm and the emperor gave up trying. He then ordered that Abdullah too be thrown into the pot. As he was being taken away he began to shed tears. The emperor thought that he had at last been broken and had him brought back to him. He once more suggested that Abdullah become a Christian but to his astonishment, Abdullah refused.

"Damn you! Why did you weep then?" shouted the emperor.

"I cried," said Abdullah, "because I said to myselfÑ 'You will now be thrown into this pot and your soul will depart'. What I really desired then was to have as many souls as the number of hairs on my body and to have all of them thrown into this pot for the sake of God."

The tyrant then said, "Will you kiss my head? I will then set you free?" "And all the Muslim prisoners also?" asked Abdullah.

This the emperor agreed to do and Abdullah said to himself, "One of the enemies of God! I shall kiss his head and he shall set me and all other Muslim prisoners free. There can be no blame on me for doing this." He then went up to the emperor and kissed his forehead. All the Muslim prisoners were released and handed over to Abdullah.

Abdullah ibn Hudhafah eventually came to Umar ibn alKhattab and told him what had happened. Umar was greatly pleased and when he looked at the prisoners he said, "Every Muslim has a duty to kiss the head of Abdullah ibn Khudhafah and I shall start."

Umar then got up and kissed the head of Abdullah ibn Hudhafah.

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Abdullah Ibn Jahsh

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Abdullah ibn Jahsh was a cousin of the Prophet and his sister, Zaynab bint Jahsh, was a wife of the Prophet. He was the first to head a group of Muslims on an expedition and so was the first to be called "Amir al-Mu'mineen"Ñ Commander of the Believers.

Abdullah ibn Jahsh became a Muslim before the Prophet entered the House of al-Arqam which became a meeting place, a school and a place of refuge for the early Muslims. He was thus one of the first to accept Islam.

When the Prophet gave permission for his Companions to emigrate to Madinah to avoid further persecution from the Quraysh, Abdullah ibn Jahsh was the second to leave, preceded only by Abu Salamah. Emigrating was not a new experience for Abdullah. He and some members of his immediate family had migrated before to Abyssinia. This time, however, his migration was on a far bigger scale. His family and relativesÑmen, women and children, migrated with him. In fact, his whole clan had become Muslims and accompanied him.

There was an air of desolation as they left Makkah. Their homes appeared sad and depressed as if no one had lived there before. No sound of conversation emanated from behind those silent walls.

Abdullah's clan were not long gone when.the alerted Quraysh leaders came out and made the rounds of the districts in Makkah to find out which Muslims had left and who had remained. Among these leaders were Abu Jahl and Utbah ibn Rabi'ah. Utbah looked at the houses of the Banu Jahsh through which the dusty winds were blowing. He banged on the doors and shouted:

"The houses of the Banu Jahsh have become empty and are weeping for its occupants."

'Who were these people anyway," said Abu Jahl derisively, "that houses should weep for them." He then laid claim to the house of Abdullah ibn Jahsh. It was the most beautiful and expensive of the houses. He began to dispose freely of its contents as a king would share out his possessions .

Later, when Abdullah ibn Jahsh heard what Abu Jahl had done to his house, he mentioned it to the Prophet, peace be upon him, who said:

"Aren't you satisfied, O Abdullah, with what God has given you insteadÑa house in Paradise?"

"Yes, messenger of God," he replied, and became at peace with himself and completely satisfied.

Abdullah ibn Jahsh had scarcely settled down in Madinah when he had to undergo one of the most testing experiences. He had just begun to taste something of the good and restful life under the sponsorship of the AnsarÑ after going through persecution at the hands of the QurayshÑwhen he had to be exposed to the severest test he had ever known in his life and carry out the most difficult assignment since he became a Muslim.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, commissioned eight of his Companions to carry out the first military assignment in Islam. Among them were Abdullah ibn Jahsh and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas.

"I appoint as your Commander the one who can best bear hunger and thirst," said the Prophet and gave the standard to Abdullah ibn Jahsh. He was thus the first to be made amir over a contingent of believers.

The Prophet gave him precise instructions on the route he should take on the expedition and gave him a letter. He commanded Abdullah to read the letter only after two days' travel.

After the expedition had been on its way for two days, Abdullah looked at the contents of the letter. It said, "When you have read this letter, press on until you come to a place called Nakhlah between Ta'if and Makkah. From there observe the Quraysh and gather whatever information you can on them for us."

"At your command, O Prophet of God," exclaimed Abdullah as he finished reading the letter. Then he spoke to his colleagues:

"The Prophet has commanded me to proceed to Nakhlah to observe the Quraysh and gather information on them for him. He has also commanded me not to go further with anyone of you who is against the purpose of this expedition. So whoever desires martyrdom and is in total agreement with this expedition can accompany me. Whoever is not in agreement, may turn back without blame."

"At your command, O messenger of Allah," they all responded. "We shall go with you, Abdullah, wherever the Prophet of God has commanded."

The group continued until they reached Nakhlah and began to move along the mountain passes seeking information on Quraysh movements. While they were thus engaged, they saw in the distance a Quraysh caravan. There were four men in the caravanÑAmr ibn alHadrami, Hukm ibn Kaysan, Uthman ibn Abdullah and his brother Mughirah. They were carrying merchandise for the QurayshÑskins, raisins and other usual Quraysh stock in trade.

The Sahabah conferred together. It was the last day of the sacred months. "If we were to kill them," they agreed, "we would have killed them in the inviolable months. To do so would be to violate the sacredness of this month and expose ourselves to the wrath of all Arabs. If we leave them alone for a day so that the month will be completed, they would have entered the inviolable precincts of Makkah and thus be secure from us."

They continued consulting until finally they agreed to pounce on the caravan and take whatever merchandise they could as booty. Before long, two of the men were captured and one was killed; the fourth escaped.

Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his men took the two prisoners and the caravan on to Madinah. They went to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and informed him about what they had done. The Prophet was greatly upset and strongly condemned their action.

"By God, I did not command you to fight. I only commanded you to gather information on the Quraysh and observe their movements." He granted a reprieve to the two prisoners and he left the caravan and did not take a single item from it.

Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his men then knew that they had fallen into disgrace and felt certain that they were ruined because of their disobeying the command of the Prophet. They began to feel the pressure as

their Muslim brothers censured them and avoided them whenever they passed one another. And they would say, "These went against the command of the Prophet."

Their discomfiture grew when they learnt that the Quraysh had taken the incident as a means to discredit the Prophet and denounce him among the tribes. The Quraysh were saying:

"Muhammad has defiled the sacred month. He has shed blood in it, plundered wealth and captured men."

Imagine the extent of the sadness felt by Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his men at what had happened, moreso because of the acute embarrassment they had caused the Prophet.

They were sorely tormented and the agony weighed heavily on them. Then came the good news that AllahÑ Glorified be HeÑwas pleased with what they had done and had sent down revelation to His Prophet about this matter. Imagine their happiness! People came and embraced them, congratulating them on the good news and reciting to them what had been revealed in the glorious Qur'an about their action.

"They ask you about fighting in the sacred month. Say: Fighting therein is an enormity as well as preventing (people) from the path of God and disbelief in Him. Expelling people from the Masjid al Haram is a greater sin in the eyes of God. Moreover, persecution is greater than killing."
(Surah al-Baqarah 2: 212).

When these blessed verses were revealed, the Prophet's mind was eased. He took the caravan and ransomed the prisoners. He became pleased with Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his men. Their expedition was certainly a major event in the early life of the Muslim community . . .

The Battle of Badr followed. Abdullah ibn Jahsh fought in it and was put to a great test, but a test to which his faith was equal.

Then came the Battle of Uhud. There is an unforgettable story involving Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his friend Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas concerning an incident that took place during the Battle of Uhud. Let us leave Sa'd to tell the story:

During the battle, Abdullah came to me and said, "Aren't you making a duia to God?"

"Yes," said I. So we moved aside and I prayed, "O Lord, when I meet the enemy, let me meet a man of enormous strength and fury. Then grant me victory over him that I might kill him and acquire spoils from him." To this my prayer, Abdullah said Ameen and then he prayed:

"Let me meet a man of great standing and enormous fury. I shall fight him for Your sake, O Lord, and he shall fight me. He shall take me and cut off my nose and ears and when I meet You on the morrow You will say, "For what were your nose and ear cut off?" And I would reply, "For Your sake and for the sake of Your Prophet." And then You would say, "You have spoken the truth . . ." Sa'd continues the story:

The prayer of Abdullah ibn Jahsh was better than mine. I saw him at the end of the day. He was killed and mutilated and in fact his nose and his ear were hung on a tree with a thread .

God responded to the prayer of Abdullah ibn Jahsh and blessed him with martyrdom as He blessed his

uncle, the Leader of Martyrs, Hamzah ibn Abdulmuttalib. The noble Prophet buried them together in a single grave. His pure tears watered the earthÑearth annointed with the fragrance of martyrdom.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud

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When he was still a youth, not yet past the age of puberty, he used to roam the mountain trails of Makkah far away from people, tending the flocks of a Quraysh chieftain, Uqbah ibn Muayt. People called him "Ibn Umm Abd"Ñthe son of the mother of a slave. His real name was Abdullah and his father's name was Mas'ud.

The youth had heard the news of the Prophet who had appeared among his people but he did not attach any importance to it both because of his age and because he was usually far away from Makkan society. It was his custom to leave with the flock of Uqbah early in the morning and not return until nightfall.

One day while tending the flocks, Abdullah saw two men, middle-aged and of dignified bearing, coming towards him from a distance. They were obviously very tired. They were also so thirsty that their lips and throat were quite dry. They came up to him, greeted him and said, "Young man, milk one of these sheep for us that we may quench our thirst and recover our strength."

"I cannot," replied the young man. "The sheep are not mine. I am only responsible for looking after them."

The two men did not argue with him. In fact, although they were so thirsty, they were extremely pleased at the honest reply. The pleasure showed on their faces . . .

The two men in fact were the blessed Prophet himself and his companion, Abu Bakr Siddiq. They had gone out on that day to the mountains of Makkah to escape the violent persecution of the Quraysh.

The young man in turn was impressed with the Prophet and his companion and soon became quite attached to them.

It was not long before Abdullah ibn Mas'ud became a Muslim and offered to be in the service of the Prophet. The Prophet agreed and from that day the fortunate Abdullah ibn Mas'ud gave up tending sheep in exchange for looking after the needs of the blesse d Prophet.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud remained closely attached to the Prophet. He would attend to his needs both inside and outside the house. He would accompany him on journeys and expeditions. He would wake him when he slept. He would shield him when he washed. He would carry his staff and his siwak (toothbrush) and attend to his other personal needs.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud received a unique training in the household of the Prophet. He was under the guidance of the Prophet, he adopted his manner and followed his every trait until it was said of him, "He was the closest to the Prophet in character."

Abdullah was taught in the "school" of the Prophet. He was the best reciter of the Qur'an among the companions and he understood it better than them all. He was therefore the most knowledgeable on the

Shariah. Nothing can illustrate this better than the story of the man who came to Umar ibn al-Khattab as he was standing on the plain of Arafat and said:

"I have come, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, from Kufah where I left a man filling copies of the Qur'an from memory."

Umar became very angry and paced up and down beside his camel, fuming.

"Who is he?" he asked.

"Abdullah ibn Masiud," replied the man.

Umar's anger subsided and he regained his composure.

"Woe to you," he said to the man. "By God, I don't know of any person left who is more qualified in this matter than he is. Let me tell you about this." Umar continued:

"One night the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, was havmg a conversation with Abu Bakr about the situation of Muslims. I was with them. When the Prophet left, we left with him also and as we passed through the mosque, there was a man standing in Prayer whom we did not recognise. The Prophet stood and listened to him, then turned to us and said, 'Whoever wants to read the Qur'an as fresh as when it was revealed, then let him read according to the recitation of Ibn Umm Abd.'

After the Prayer, as Abdullah sat making supplications, the Prophet, peace be on him, said, "Ask and it will be given to you. Ask and it will be given to you."

Umar continued: "I said to myselfÑI shall go to Abdullah ibn Mas'ud straight away and tell him the good news of the Prophet's ensuring acceptance of his supplications. I went and did so but found that Abu Bakr had gone before me and conveyed the good news to him. By God, I have never yet beaten Abu Bakr in the doing of any good."

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud attained such a knowledge of the Qur'an that he would say, "By Him besides Whom there is no god, no verse of the book of God has been revealed without my knowing where it was revealed and the circumstances of its revelation. By God, if I know there was anyone who knew more of the Book of Allah, I will do whatever is in my power to be with him."

Abdullah was not exaggerating in what he said about himself. Once Umar ibn al-Khattab met a caravan on one of his Journeys as caliph. It was pitch dark and the caravan could not be seen properly. Umar ordered someone to hail the caravan. It happened that Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was in it.

"From where do you come?" asked Umar.

"From a deep valley," came the reply. (The expresion used fadj amiqÑ deep valleyÑis a Qur'anic one).

"And where are you going?" asked Umar.

"To the ancient house," came the reply. (The expression used al-bayt al-atiqÑthe ancient houseÑis a Qur'anic one.)

"There is a learned person (alim) among them," said Umar and he commanded someone to ask the

person:

"Which part of the Qur'an is the greatest?"

" 'God. There is no god except Him, the Living, the Selfsubsisting. Neither slumber overtakes Him nor sleep,' " replied the person answering, quoting the Ayat al-Kursi (the verse of the Throne).

"Which part of the Qur'an is the most clear on justice?"

" 'God commands what is just and fair, the feeding of relatives . . .' " came the answer.

"What is the most comprehensive statement of the Qur'an?" " 'Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it.' "

"Which part of the Qur'an gives rise to the greatest hope?"

" 'Say, O my servants who have wasted their resources, do not despair of the mercy of God. Indeed, God forgives all sins. He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate.' "

Thereupon Umar asked: "Is Abdullah ibn Masiud among you?"

"Yes, by God," the men in the caravan replied.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was not only a reciter of the Qur'an, a learned man or a fervent worshipper. He was in addition a strong and courageous fighter, one who became deadly serious when the occasion demanded it.

The companions of the Prophet were together one day in Makkah. They were still few in number, weak and oppressed. They said, "The Quraysh have not yet heard the Qur'an being recited openly and loudly. Who is the man who could recite it for them?"

"I shall recite it for them," volunteered Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.

"We are afraid for you," they said. "We only want someone who has a clan who would protect him from their

"Let me," Abdullah ibn Mas'ud insisted, "Allah shall protect me and keep me away from their evil." He then went out to the mosque until he reached Maqam Ibrahim (a few metres from the Ka'bah). It was dawn and the Quraysh were sitting around the Ka'bah. Abdullah stopped at the Maqam and began to recite:

" 'Bismillahir Rahmani-r Rahim. ArRahman. Allama-l | Qur'an. Khalaqa-l insan. Allamahu-l bayan . . . (In the | name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. The Merciful s God. He has taught the Qur'an. He has created man and taught him the clear truth . . .)' "

He went on reciting. The Quraysh looked at him intently and some of them asked:

"What is Ibn Umm Abd saying?"

"Damn him! He is reciting some of what Muhammad brought!" they realized.

They went up to him and began beating his face as he continued reciting. When he went back to his companions, the blood was flowing from his face.

"This is what we feared for you," they said.

"By God," replied Abdullah, "the enemies of God are not more comfortable than I at this moment. If you wish. I shall go out tomorrow and do the same."

"You have done enough," they said. "You have made them hear what they dislike."

Abdullah ibn Masiud lived to the time of Khalifah Uthman, may God be pleased with him. When he was sick and on his death-bed, Uthman came to visit him and said:

"What is your ailment?"

"My sins."

"And what do you desire?"

"The mercy of my Lord."

"Shall I not give you your stipend which you have refused to take for years now?"

"I have no need of it."

"Let it be for your doughters after you."

"Do you fear poverty for my children? I have commanded them to read Surah Al-Waqi'ah every night for I have heard the Prophet saying, 'Whoever reads Al-Waqi'ah every night shall ot be effected by poverty ever.'"

That night, Abdullah passed away to the company of his Lord, his toughte moist with the rememberance of God and with the recitation of the verses of His Book.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Abdullah Ibn Sailam

Al-Husayn ibn Sailam was a Jewish rabbi in Yathrib who was widely respected and honoured by the people of the city even by those who were not Jewish. He was known for his piety and goodness, his upright conduct and his truthfulness.

Al-Husayn lived a peaceful and gentle life but he was serious, purposeful and organized in the way he spent his time. For a fixed period each day, he would worship, teach and preach in the temple. Then he would spend some time in his orchard, looking after date palms, pruning and pollinating. Thereafter, to increase his understanding and knowledge of his religion, he would devote himself to the study of the Torah.

In this study, it is said. he was particularly struck by some verses of the Torah which dealt with the coming of a Prophet who would complete the message of previous Prophets. Al-Husayn therefore took an immediate and keen interest when he heard reports of the appearance of a Prophet in Makkah. He said:

"When I heard of the appearance of the Messenger of God, peace be on him, I began to make enquiries about his name, his genealogy, his characteristics, his time and place and I began to compare this information with what is contained m our books. From these enquiries, I became convinced about the authenticity of his prophethood and I affirmed the truth of his mission. However, I concealed my conclusions from the Jews. I held my tongue...

Then came the day when the Prophet, peace be on him, left Makkah and headed for Yathrib. When he reached Yathrib and stopped at Quba, a man came rushing into the city, calling out to people and announcing the arrival of the Prophet. At that moment, I was at the top of a palm tree doing some work. My aunt, Khalidah bint al-Harith, was sitting under the tree. On hearing the news, I shouted:

'Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! (God is Great! God is Great!' When my aunt heard my takbir, she remonstrated with me: 'May God frustrate you...By God, if you had heard that Moses was coming you would not have been more enthusiastic.'

'Auntie, he is really, by God, the 'brother' of Moses and follows his religion. He was sent with the same mission as Moses.' She was silent for a while and then said: 'Is he the Prophet about whom you spoke to us who would be sent to confirm the truth preached by previous (Prophets) and complete the message of his Lord?' 'Yes,' I replied.

Without any delay or hesitation, I went out to meet the Prophet. I saw crowds of people at his door. I moved about in the crowds until I reached close to him. The first words I heard him say were:

'O people! Spread peace...Share food...Pray during the night while people (normally) sleep... and you will enter Paradise in peace...'

I looked at him closely. I scrutinized him and was convinced that his face was not that of an imposter. I went closer to him and made the declaration of faith that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad

is the Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet turned to me and asked: 'What is your name?' 'Al-Husayn ibn Sailam,' I replied.

'Instead, it is (now) Abdullah ibn Sallam,' he said (giving me a new name). 'Yes,' I agreed. 'Abdullah ibn Sailam (it shall be). By Him who has sent you with the Truth, I do not wish to have another name after this day.'

I returned home and introduced Islam to my wife, my children and the rest of my household. They all accepted Islam including my aunt KhaIidah who was then an old lady. However, I advised them then to conceal our acceptance of Islam from the Jews until I gave them permission. They agreed.

Subsequently, I went back to the Prophet, peace be on him, and said: 'O Messenger of God! The Jews are a people (inclined to) slander and falsehood. I want you to invite their most prominent men to meet you. (During the meeting however), you should keep me concealed from them in one of your rooms. Ask them then about my status among them before they find out of my acceptance of Islam. Then invite them to Islam. If they were to know that I have become a Muslim, they would denounce me and accuse me of everything base and slander me.'

The Prophet kept me in one of his rooms and invited the prominent Jewish personalities to visit him. He introduced Islam to them and urged them to have faith in God...They began to dispute and argue with him about the Truth. When he realized that they were not inclined to accept Islam, he put the question to them:

'What is the status of Al-Husayn ibn Sailam among you?'

'He is our sayyid (leader) and the son of our sayyid. He is our rabbi and our alim (scholar), the son of our rabbi and alim.'

'If you come to know that he has accepted Islam, would you accept Islam also?' asked the Prophet.

'God forbid! He would not accept Islam. May God protect him from accepting Islam,' they said (horrified).

At this point I came out in full view of them and announced: 'O assembly of Jews! Be conscious of God and accept what Muhammad has brought. By God, you certainly know that he is the Messenger of God and you can find prophecies about him and mention of his name and characteristics in your Torah. I for my part declare that he is the Messenger of God. I have faith in him and believe that he is true. I know him.'

'You are a liar,' they shouted. 'By God, you are evil and ignorant, the son of an evil and ignorant person.' And they continued to heap every conceivable abuse on

me..."

Abdullah ibn Sailam approached Islam with a soul thirsty for knowledge. He was passionately devoted to the Quran and spent much time reciting and studying its beautiful and sublime verses. He was deeply attached to the noble Prophet and was constantly in his company.

Much of his time he spent in the masjid, engaged in worship, in learning and in teaching. He was known

for his sweet, moving and effective way of teaching study circles of Sahabah who assembled regularly in the Prophet's mosque.

Abdullah ibn Sallam was known among the Sahabah as a man from ahl-al-Jannah "- the people of Paradise. This was because of his determination on the advice of the Prophet to hold steadfastly to the "most trustworthy handhold" that is belief in and total submission to God.

Abdullah Ibn Umar

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At Shaykhan, halfway between Madinah and Uhud, the thousand strong Muslim army led by the Prophet stopped. The sun had begun to sink beneath the horizon. The Prophet dismounted from his horse Sakb. He was fully dressed for battle. A turban was wound about his helmet. He wore a breastplate beneath which was a coat of mail which was fastened with a leather sword belt. A shield was slung across his back and his sword hung from his side.

As the sun set, Bilal called the adhan and they prayed. The Prophet then reviewed his troops once more and it was then that he noticed in their midst the presence of eight boys who despite their age were hoping to take part in the battle. Among them were Zayd's son Usamah and Umar's son Abdullah, both only thirteen years old. The Prophet ordered them all to return home immediately. Two of the boys however demonstrated that they were able fighters and were allowed to accompany the army to the Battle of Uhu d while the others were sent back to their families.

From an early age, Abdullah ibn Umar thus demonstrated his keenness to be associated with the Prophet in all his undertakings. He had accepted Islam before he was ten years old and had made the Hijrah with his father and his sister, Hafsah, who was later to become a wife of the Prophet. Before Uhud he was also turned away from the Battle of Badr and it was not until the Battle of the Ditch the he and Usamah, both now fifteen years old and others of their age were allowed to join the ranks of the men not only for the digging of the trench but for the battle when it came.

From the time of his hijrah till the time of his death more than seventy years later, Abdullah ibn Umar distinguished himself in the service of Islam and was regarded among Muslims as "the Good One, son of the Good One", according to Abu Musa al-Ashari. H e was known for his knowledge, his humility, his generosity, his piety, his truthfulness, his incorruptibility and his constancy in acts of ibadah.

From his great and illustrious father, Umar, he learnt a great deal and both he and his father had the benefit of learning from the greatest teacher of all, Muhammad the Messenger of God. Abdullah would observe and scrutinize closely every saying and act ion of the Prophet in various situations and he would practise what he observed closely and with devotion. For example, if Abdullah saw the Prophet performing Salat in a particular place, he would later pray in the same place. If he saw the Prophet makin g a supplication while standing, he would also make a dua while standing. If he saw him making a dua while sitting, he would do the same. On a journey if he saw the Prophet descend from his camel at a particular place and pray two rakats, and he had occa sion to pass on the same route, he would stop at the same place and pray two rakats. In a particular place in Makkah, he once observed the Prophet's camel making two complete turns before he dismounted and prayed two rakats. It might be that the camel did that involuntarily but Abdullah ibn Umar when he happened to be in the same place at another time, made his camel complete two turns before making it kneel and dismounting. He then prayed two rakats in precisely the same manner as he had seen the Prophet do.

Aishah, may God be pleased with her, noticed this devotion of Abdullah to the Prophet and remarked: "There was no one who followed the footsteps of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, in the places where he alighted as did Ibn Umar."

In spite of his close observance of the Prophet's actions, Abdullah was extremely cautious, even afraid, of reporting the sayings of the Prophet. He would only relate a hadith if he was completely sure that he remembered every word of it. One of his conte mporaries said:

"Among the companions of the Prophet, no one was more cautious about adding to or subtracting from the hadith of the Prophet than Abdullah ibn Umar."

Similarly he was extremely cautious and reluctant to make legal judgments (fatwas).' Once someone came to him asking for a judgment on a particular matter and Abdullah ibn Umar replied: "I have no knowledge of what you ask." The man went on his way and Ab dullah clapped his hands in glee and said to himself: "The son of Umar was asked about what he does not know and he said: I do not know."

Because of this attitude he was reluctant to be a qadi even though he was well qualified to be one. The position of qadi was one of the most important and esteemed offices in the Muslim society and state bringing with it honor, glory and even riches but h e declined this position when it was offered him by the Khalifah Uthman. His reason for so doing was not that he underestimated the importance of the position of qadi but because of his fear of committing errors of judgment in matters pertaining to Islam. Uthman made him agree not to disclose his decision lest it might influence the many other companions of the Prophet who actually performed the duties of judges and juris consults.

Abdullah ibn Umar was once described as the "brother of the night." He would stay up at night performing Salat, weeping and seeking God's forgiveness and reading Quran. To his sister, Hafsah, the Prophet once said: "What a blessed man is Abdullah. Should he perform Salat at night he would be blessed even more."

From that day, Abdullah did not abandon aiyam alLayl whether at home or on journeys. In the stillness of the nights, he would remember God much, perform Salat and read the Quran and weep. Like his father, tears came readily to his eyes especially when he heard the warning verses of the Quran. Ubayd ibn Umayr has related that one day he read these verses to Abdullah ibn Umar:

"How then (will the sinners fare on Judgment Day) when We shall bring forward witnesses from within every community and bring you (O Prophet) as witness against them? Those who were bent on denying the truth and paid no heed to the Apostle will on that Da y wish that the earth would swallow them but they shall not (be able to) conceal from God anything that has happened." (Surah an-Nisa, 4:41-42).

Abdullah cried on listening to these verses until his beard was moist with tears. One day, he was sitting among some close friends and he read: "Woe unto those who give short measure, those who, when they are to receive their due from people, demand that it be given in full but when they have to measure or weigh whatever they owe to others, give less than what is due. Do they not know that they are bound to be raised from the dead (and called to account) on an awesome Day, the Day when all men shall stan d before the Sustainer of all the worlds?" (The Quran, Surah al Mutaffifin, 83: 1-6). At this point he kept on repeating "the Day when all men shall stand before the Sustainer of all the worlds" over and over again and weeping until he was faint.

Piety, simplicity and generosity combined in Abdullah to make him a person who was highly esteemed by the companions and those who came after them. He gave generously and did not mind parting with wealth even if he himself would fall in want as a result. He was a successful and trustworthy trader throughout his life. In addition to this he had a generous stipend from the Bayt al-Mal which he would often spend on the poor and those in need. Ayyub ibn Wail ar-Rasi recounted one incident of his generosity:< P> One day Umar received four thousand dirhams and a velvet blanket. The following day

Ayyub saw him in the suq buying fodder for his camel on credit. Ayyub then went to Abdullah's family and asked:

"Didn't Abu Abdur-Rahman (meaning Abdullah ibn Umar) get four thousand dirhams and a blanket yesterday?" "Yes, indeed," they replied.

"But I saw him today in the suq buying fodder for his camel and he had no money to pay for it." "Before nightfall yesterday. he had parted with it all. Then he took the blanket and threw it over his shoulder and went out. When he returned it was not with him. We asked him about it and he said that he had given it to a poor person," they explained.

Abdullah ibn Umar encouraged the feeding and the helping of the poor and the needy. Often when he ate, there were orphans and poor people eating with him. He rebuked his children for treating the rich and ignoring the poor. He once said to them: "You invi te the rich and forsake the poor."

For Abdullah, wealth was a servant not a master. It was a means towards attaining the necessities of life, not for acquiring luxuries. He was helped in this attitude by his asceticism and simple life-style. One of his friends who came from Khurasan once brought him a fine elegant piece of clothing:

"I have brought this thawb for you from Khurasan," he said. "It would certainly bring coolness to your eyes. I suggest that you take off these coarse clothes you have and put on this beautiful thawb."

"Show it to me then," said Abdullah and on touching it he asked: "Is it silk?" "No, it is cotton," replied his friend.

For a little while, Abdullah was pleased. Then with his right hand he pushed away the thawb and said: "No! I am afraid for myself. I fear that it shall make arrogant and boastful. And God does not love the arrogant boaster."

Maymun ibn Mahran relates the following: "I entered the house of Ibn Umar. I estimated everything in his house including his bed, his blanket, his carpet and everything else in it. What I found was not a hundred dirhams' worth."

That was not because Abdullah ibn Umar was poor. Indeed he was rich. Neither was it because he was a miser for indeed he was generous and liberal.

Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum was a cousin of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Mother of the Believers, may God be pleased with her. His father was Qays ibn Za'id and his mother was Aatikah bint Abdullah. She was called Umm Maktum (Mother of the Concealed One) because she gave birth to a blind child.

Abdullah witnessed the rise of Islam in Makkah. He was amongst the first to accept Islam. He lived through the persecution of the Muslims and suffered what the other companions of the Prophet experienced. His attitude, like theirs, was one of firmness, staunch resistance and sacrifice. Neither his dedication nor his faith weakened against the violence of the Quraysh onslaught. In fact, all this only increased his determination to hold on to the religion of God and his devotion to His messenger.

Abdullah was devoted to the noble Prophet and he was so eager to memorize the Qur'an that he would not miss any opportunity to achieve his heart's desire. Indeed, his sense of urgency and his insistence could sometimes have been irritating as he, unintentionally, sought to monopolize the attention of the Prophet.

In this period, the Prophet, peace be upon him, was concentrating on the Quraysh notables and was eager that they should become Muslims. On one particular day, he met Utbah ibn Rabiah and his brother Shaybah, Amr ibn Hisham better known as Abu Jahl, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and Walid ibn Mughirah, the father of Khalid ibn Walid who was later to be known as Sayf Allah or 'the sword of God'. He had begun talking and negotiating with them and telling them about Islam. He so much wished that they would respond positively to him and accept Islam or at least call off their persecution of his companions.

While he was thus engaged, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum came up and asked him to read a verse from the Qur'an.

"O messenger of God," he said, "teach me from what God has taught you." The Prophet frowned and turned away from him. He turned his attention instead to the prestigious group of Quraysh, hoping that they would become Muslims and that by their acceptance of Islam they would bring greatness to the religion of God and strengthen his mission. As soon as he had finished speaking to them and had left their company, he suddenly felt partially blinded and his head began to throb violently. At this point the following revelation came to him:

"He frowned and turned away when the blind man approached him! Yet for all you knew, (O Muhammad), he might perhaps have grown in purity or have been reminded of the Truth, and helped by this reminder. Now as for him who believes himself to be self-sufficientÑto him you gave your whole attention, although you are not accountable for his failure to attain to purity. But as for him who came unto you full of eagerness and in awe of God, him did you disregard.

Nay, verily, this is but a reminder and so, whoever is willing may remember Him in the light of His revelations blest with dignity, lofty and pure, borne by the hands of messengers, noble and most virtuous."
(Surah Abasa 80: 116).

These are the sixteen verses which were revealed to the noble Prophet about Abdullah ibn Umm MaktumÑsixteen verses that have continued to be recited from that time till today and shall continue to be recited.

From that day the Prophet did not cease to be generous to Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, to ask him about his affairs, to fulfil his needs and take him into his council whenever he approached. This is not strange. Was he not censured by God in a most severe manner on Abdullah's account? In fact, in later years, he often greeted Ibn Umm Maktum with these words of humility:

"Welcome unto him on whose account my Sustainer has rebuked me."

When the Quraysh intensified their persecution of the Prophet and those who believed with him, God gave them permission to emigrate. Abdullah's response was prompt. He ana Mus'ab ibn Umayr were the first of the Companions to reach Madinah.

As soon as they reached Yathrib, he and Mus'ab began discussing with the people, reading the Qur'an to them and teaching them the religion of God. When the Prophet, upon whom be peace; arrived in Madinah, he appointed Abdullah and Bilal ibn Rabah to be muadh-dhins for the Muslims, proclaiming the Oneness of God five times a day, calling man to the best of actions and summoning them to success.

Bilal would call the adhan and Abdullah would pronounce the iqamah for the Prayer. Sometimes they would reverse the process. During Ramadan, they adopted a special routine. One of them would call the adhan to wake people up to eat before the fast began.

The other would call the adhan to announce the beginning of dawn and the fast. It was Bilal who would awaken the people and Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum who would announce the beginning of dawn.

One of the responsibilities that the Prophet placed on Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum was to put him in charge of Madinah in his absence. This was done more than ten times, one of them being when he left for the liberation of Makkah.

Sasn after the battle of Badr, the Prophet received a revelation from God raising the status of the mujahideen and preferring them over the qa'ideen (those who remain inactive at home). This was in order to encourage the mujahid even further and to spur the qa'id to give up his inactivity. This revelation affected ibn Umm Maktum deeply. It pained him to be thus barred from the higher status and he said:

"O messenger of God. If I could go on jihad, I would certainly do." He then earnestly asked God to send down a revelation about his particular case and those like him who were prevented because of their disabilities from going on military campaigns.

His prayer was answered. An additional phrase was revealed to the Prophet exempting those with disabilities from the import of the original verse. The full ayah became:

"Not equal are those who remain seated among the believers except those who possess disabilitiesÑand those who strive and fight in the way of God with their wealth and their persons . . ."
(Surah an-Nisaa, 4: 95).

In spite of thus being excused from jihad, the soul of Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum refused to be content with staying among those who remained at home when an expedition was in progress. Great souls are

not content with remaining detached from affairs of great moment. He determined that no campaign should by-pass him. He fixed a role for himself on the battle field. He would say: "Place me between two rows and give me the standard. I will carry it for you and protect it, for I am blind and cannot run away."

In the fourteenth year after the hijrah, Umar resolved to mount a major assault against the Persians to bring down their State and open the way for the Muslim forces. So he wrote to his governors:

"Send anyone with a weapon or a horse or who can offer any form of help to me. And make haste."

Crowds of Muslims from every direction responded to Umar's call and converged on Madinah. Among all these was the blind mujahid, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum.

Umar appointed Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas commander over the army, gave him instructions and bade him farewell. When the army reached Qadisiyyah, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum was prominent, wearing a coat of armour and fully prepared. He had vowed to carry and protect the standard of the Muslims or be killed in the process.

The forces met and engaged in battle for three days. The fighting was among the most fierce and bitter in the history of the Muslim conquests. On the third day, the Muslims achieved a mighty victory as one of the greatest empires in the world collapsed and one of the most secure thrones fell. The standard of Tawhid was raised in an idolatrous land. The price of this clear victory was hundreds of martyrs. Among them was Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum. He was found dead on the battlefield clutching the flag of the Muslims.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Abdur-Rahman Ibn Awl

From Alim® Online

He was one of the first eight persons to accept Islam. He was one of the ten persons (al-asharatu-l mubashshirin) who were assured of entering Paradise. He was one of the six persons chosen by Umar to form the council of shura to choose the Khalifah afte r his death.

His name in Jahiliyyah days was Abu Amr. But when he accepted Islam the noble Prophet called him Abdur-Rahman - the servant of the Beneficent God.

Abdur-Rahman became a Muslim before the Prophet entered the house of al-Arqam. In fact it is said that he accepted Islam only two days after Abu Bakr as-Siddiq did so.

Abdur-Rahman did not escape the punishment which the early Muslims suffered at the hands of the Quraysh. He bore this punishment with steadfastness as they did. He remained firm as they did. And when they were compelled to leave Makkah for Abyssinia beca use of the continuous and unbearable persecution, Abdur-Rahman also went. He returned to Makkah when it was rumored that conditions for the Muslims had improved but, when these rumors proved to be false, he left again for Abyssinia on a second hijrah. Fro m Makkah once again he made the hijrah to Madinah.

Soon after arriving in Madinah, the Prophet in his unique manner began pairing off the Muhajirin and the Ansar. This established a firm bond of brotherhood and was meant to strengthen social cohesion and ease the destitution of the Muhajirin. Abdur-Rahman was linked by the Prophet with Sad ibn ar-Rabi'ah. Sad in the spirit of generosity and magnanimity with which the Ansar greeted the Muhajirin, said to Abdur-Rahman:

"My brother! Among the people of Madinah I have the most wealth. I have two orchards and I have two wives. See which of the two orchards you like and I shall vacate it for you and which of my two wives is pleasing to you and I will divorce her for you."

Abdur-Rahman must have been embarrassed and said in reply: "May God bless you in your family and your wealth. But just show me where the suq is.."

Abdur-Rahman went to the market-place and began trading with whatever little resources he had. He bought and sold and his profits grew rapidly. Soon he was sufficiently well off and was able to get married. He went to the noble Prophet with the scent of perfume lingering over him.

"Mahyarn, O Abdur-Rahman!" exclaimed the Prophet - "mahyam" being a word of Yemeni origin which indicates pleasant surprise.

"I have got married," replied Abdur-Rahman. "And what did you give your wife as mahr?" "The weight of a nuwat in gold."

"You must have a walimah (wedding feast) even if it is with a single sheep. And may Allah bless you in your wealth," said the Prophet with obvious pleasure and encouragement.

Thereafter Abdur-Rahman grew so accustomed to business success that he said if he lifted a stone he expected to find gold or silver under it!

Abdur-Rahman distinguished himself in both the battles of Badr and Uhud. At Uhud he remained firm throughout and suffered more than twenty wounds some of them deep and severe. Even so, his physical jihad was matched by his jihad with his wealth.

Once the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, was preparing to despatch an expeditionary force. He summoned his companions and said:

"Contribute sadaqah for I want to despatch an expedition." Abdur-Rahman went to his house and quickly returned. "O Messenger of God," he said, "I have four thousand (dinars). I give two thousand as a qard to my Lord and two thousand I leave for my family. "

When the Prophet decided to send an expedition to distant Tabuk - this was the last ghazwah of his life that he mounted - his need for finance and material was not greater than his need for men for the Byzantine forces were a numerous and well-equipped fo e. That year in Madinah was one of drought and hardship. The journey to Tabuk was long, more that a thousand kilometers. Provisions were in short supply. Transport was at a premium so much so that a group of Muslims came to the Prophet pleading to go wit h him but he had to turn them away because he could find no transport for them.

These men were sad and dejected and came to be known as the Bakka'in or the Weepers and the army itself was called the Army of Hardship ('Usrah). Thereupon the Prophet called upon his companions to give generously for the war effort in the path of God an d assured them they would be rewarded. The Muslims' response to the Prophet's call was immediate and generous. In the fore front of those who responded was Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl. He donated two hundred awqiyyah of gold whereupon Umar ibn al-Khattab said to the Prophet:

"I have (now) seen Abdur-Rahman committing a wrong. He has not left anything for his family."

"Have you left anything for your family, Abdur-Rahman?" asked the Prophet.

"Yes," replied Abdur-Rahman. "I have left for them more than what I give and better." "How much?" enquired the Prophet.

"What God and His Messenger have promised of sustenance, goodness and reward," replied Abdur-Rahman.

The Muslim army eventually left for Tabuk. There Abdur-Rahman was blessed with an honor which was not conferred on anyone till then. The time of Salat came and the Prophet, peace be on him, was not there at the time. The Muslims chose Abdur-Rahman as the ir imam. The first rakat of the Salat was almost completed when the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, joined the worshippers and performed the Salat behind Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl. Could there be a greater honor conferred on anyone than to have been the imam of the most honored of God's creation, the imam of the Prophets, the imam of Muhammad, the Messenger of God!

When the Prophet, peace be on him, passed away, Abdur-Rahman took on the responsibility of looking after the needs of his family, the Ummahaat al-Muminin. He would go with them wherever they wanted to and he even performed Hajj with them to ensure that a ll their needs were met. This is a sign of the trust and confidence which he enjoyed on the part of the Prophet's family.

Abdur-Rahman's support for the Muslims and the Prophet's wives in particular was well-known. Once he sold a piece of land for forty thousand dinars and he distributed the entire amount among the Banu Zahrah (the relatives of the Prophet's mother Aminah), the poor among the Muslims and the Prophet's wives. When Aishah, may God be pleased with her, received some of this money she asked:

"Who has sent this money?" and was told it was Abdur-Rahman, whereupon she said:

"The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: No one will feel compassion towards you after I die except the sabirin (those who are patient and resolute)."

The prayer of the noble Prophet that Allah should bestow barakah on the wealth of Abdur-Rahman appeared to be with Abdur-Rahman throughout his life. He became the richest man among the companions of the Prophet. His business transactions invariably met with success and his wealth continued to grow. His trading caravans to and from Madinah grew larger and larger bringing to the people of Madinah wheat, flour, butter, cloths, utensils, perfume and whatever else was needed and exporting whatever surplus pr oduce they had.

One day, a loud rumbling sound was heard coming from beyond the boundaries of Madinah normally a calm and peaceful city. The rumbling sound gradually increased in volume. In addition, clouds of dust and sand were stirred up and blown in the wind. The peo ple of Madinah soon realized that a mighty caravan was entering the city. They stood in amazement as seven hundred camels laden with goods moved into the city and crowded the streets. There was much shouting and excitement as people called to one another to come out and witness the sight and see what goods and sustenance the camel caravan had brought.

Aishah, may God be pleased with her, heard the commotion and asked: "What is this that's happening in Madinah?" and she was told: "It is the caravan of Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl which has come from Syria bearing his merchandise."

"A caravan making all this commotion?" she asked in disbelief."

"Yes, O Umm al-Muminin. There are seven hundred camels."

Aishah shook her head and gazed in the distance as if she was trying to recall some scene or utterance of the past and then she said:

"I have heard the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, say: I have seen Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl entering Paradise creeping."

Why creeping? Why should he not enter Paradise leaping and at a quick pace with the early companions of the Prophet?

Some friends of his related to Abdur-Rahman the hadith which Aishah had mentioned. He remembered that he had heard the hadith more than once from the Prophet and he hurried to the house of Aishah and said to her: "Yaa Ammah! Have you heard that from the M essenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace?"

"Yes," she replied.

"You have reminded me of a hadith which I have never forgotten," he is also reported to have said. He

was so over-joyed and added:

"If I could I would certainly like to enter Paradise standing. I swear to you, yaa Ammah, that this entire caravan with all its merchandise, I will giver sabilillah."

And so he did. In a great festival of charity and righteousness, he distributed all that the massive caravan had brought to the people of Madinah and surrounding areas.

This is just one incident which showed what type of man Abdur-Rahman was. He earned much wealth but he never remained attached to it for its own sake and he did not allow it to corrupt him.

Abdur-Rahman's generosity did not stop there. He continued giving with both his hands, secretly and openly. Some of the figures mentioned are truly astounding: forty thousand dirhams of silver, forty thousand dinars of gold, two hundred awqiyyah of gold, five hundred horses to mujahidin setting out in the path of God and one thousand five hundred camels to another group of mujahidin, four hundred dinars of gold to the survivors of Badr and a large legacy to the Ummahaat al Muminin and the catalogue goes on. On account of this fabulous generosity, Aishah said:

"May God give him to drink from the water of Salsabil (a spring in Paradise)." All this wealth did not corrupt Abdur-Rahman and did not change him. When he was among his workers and assistants, people could not distinguish him from them. One day food was brought to him with which to end a fast. He looked at the food and said:

"Musab ibn Umayr has been killed. He was better than me. We did not find anything of his to shroud him with except what covered his head but left his legs uncovered. . Then God endowed us with the (bounties of) the world... I really fear that our reward h as been bestowed on us early (in this world)." He began to cry and sob and could not eat.

May Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl be granted felicity among "those who spend their substance in the cause of God and follow up not their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury. For them their reward is with their Lord, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve". (The Quran, Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 262).

Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Khalid ibn Zayd ibn Kulayb from the Banu Najjar was a great and close companion of the Prophet. He was known as Abu Ayyub (the father of Ayyub) and enjoyed a privilege which many of the Ansar in Madinah hoped they would have.

When the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, reached Madinah after his hijrah from Makkah, he was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Ansar of Madinah. Their hearts went out to him and their eyes followed him with devotion and love. They want ed to give him the most generous reception anyone could be given.

The Prophet first stopped at Quba on the outskirts of Madinah and stayed there for some days. The first thing he did was to build a mosque which is described in the Qur'an as the "mosque built on the foundation of piety (taqwa)".
(Surah At-Tawbah 9: 108).

The Prophet entered Madinah on his camel. The chieftains of the city stood along his path, each one wishing to have the honour of the Prophet alighting and staying at his house. One after the other stood in the camel's way entreating, "Stay with us, O Ra sulullah."

"Leave the camel," the Prophet would say. "It is under command."

The camel continued walking, closely followed by the eyes and hearts of the people of Yathrib. When it went past a house, its owner would feel sad and dejected and hope would rise in the hearts of others still on the route.

The camel continued in this fashion with the people following it until it hesitated at an open space in front of the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. But the Prophet, upon whom be peace, did not get down. After only a short while, the camel set off again, t he Prophet leaving its reins loose. Before long, however, it turned round, retraced its steps and stopped on the same spot as before. Abu Ayyub's heart was filled with happiness. He went out to the Prophet and greeted him with great enthusiasm. He took the Prophet's baggage in his arms and felt as if he was carrying the most precious treasure in the world.

Abu Ayyub's house had two storeys. He emptied the upper floor of his and his family's possessions so that the Prophet could stay there. But the Prophet, peace be on him, preferred to stay on the lower floor.

Night came and the Prophet retired. Abu Ayyub went up to the upper floor. But when they had closed the door, Abu Ayyub turned to his wife and said:

"Woe to us! What have we done? The messenger of God is below and we are higher than he! Can we walk on top of the messenger of God? Do we come between him and the Revelation (Waky)? If so, we are doomed."

The couple became very worried not knowing what to do. They only got some peace of mind when they moved to the side of the building which did not fall directly above the Prophet. They were careful also only to walk on the outer parts of the floor and avo id the middle.

In the morning, Abu Ayyub said to the Prophet:

"By God, we did not sleep a wink last night, neither myself nor Umm Ayyub."

"Why not, Abu Ayyub?" asked the Prophet.

Abu Ayyub explained how terrible they felt being above while the Prophet was below them and how they might have interrupted the Revelation.

"Don't worry, Abu Ayyub," said the Prophet. "We prefer the lower floor because of the many people coming to visit us."

"We submitted to the Prophet's wishes," Abu Ayyub related, "until one cold night a jar of ours broke and the water spilled on the upper floor. Umm Ayyub and I stared at the water. We only had one piece of velvet which we used as a blanket. We used it to mop up the water out of fear that it would seep through to the Prophet. In the morning I went to him and said, 'I do not like to be above you,' and told him what had happened. He accepted my wish and we changed floors."

The Prophet stayed in Abu Ayyub's house for almost seven months until his mosque was completed on the open space where his camel had stopped. He moved to the rooms which were built around the mosque for himself and his family. He thus became a neighbour of Abu Ayyub. What a noble neighbour to have had!

Abu Ayyub continued to love the Prophet with all his heart and the Prophet also loved him dearly. There was no formality between them. The Prophet continued to regard Abu Ayyub's house as his own. The following anecdote tells a great deal about the relationship between them.

Abu Bakr, may God be pleased with him, once left his house in the burning heat of the midday sun and went to the mosque. Umar saw him and asked, "Abu Bakr, what has brought you out at this hour? Abu Bakr said he had left his house because he was terribly hungry and Umar said that he had left his house for the same reason. The Prophet came up to them and asked, "What has brought the two of you out at this hour?" They told him and he said, "By Him in Whose hands is my soul, only hunger has caused me to com e out also. But come with me."

They went to the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. His wife opened the door and said, "Welcome to the Prophet and whoever is with him."

"Where is Abu Ayyub?" asked the Prophet. Abu Ayyub, who was working in a nearby palm grove, heard the Prophet's voice and came hurriedly.

"Welcome to the Prophet and whoever is with him," he said and went on, "O Prophet of God, this is not the time that you usually come." (Abu Ayyub used to keep some food for the Prophet every day. When the Prophet did not come for it by a certain time, Abu Ayyub would give it to his family.) "You are right," the Prophet agreed.

Abu Ayyub went out and cut a cluster of dates in which there were ripe and half-ripe dates.

"I did not want you to cut this," said the Prophet. "Could you not have brought only the ripe dates?"

"O Rasulullah, please eat from both the ripe dates (rutb) and the half ripe (busr). I shall slaughter an animal for you also."

"If you are going to, then do not kill one that gives milk," cautioned the Prophet.

Abu Ayyub killed a young goat, cooked half and grilled the other half. He also asked his wife to bake, because she baked better, he said.

When the food was ready, it was placed before the Prophet and his two companions. The Prophet took a piece of meat and placed it in a loaf and said, "Abu Ayyub, take this to Fatimah. She has not tasted the like of this for days."

When they had eaten and were satisfied, the Prophet said reflectively:

"Bread and meat and busr and rutb!" Tears began to flow from his eyes as he continued:

"This is a bountiful blessing about which you will be asked on the Day of Judgment. If such comes your way, put your hands to it and say, 'Bismillah' (In the name of God) and when you have finished say, 'Al hamdu lillah alladhee huwa ashba'na wa an'ama a layna (Praise be to God Who has given us enough and Who has bestowed his bounty on us). This is best."

These are glimpses of Abu Ayyub's life during peace time. He also had a distinguished military career. Much of his time was spent as a warrior until it was said of him, "He did not stay away from any battle the Muslims fought from the time of the Prophet to the time of Mu'awiyah unless he;: was engaged at the same time in another."

The last campaign he took part in was the one prepared by Mu'awiyah and led by his son Yazid against Constantinople. Abu Ayyub at that time was a very old man, almost eighty years old. But that did not prevent him from joining the army and crossing the seas as a graze in the path of God. After only a short time engaged in the battle, Abu Ayyub fell ill and had to withdraw from fighting. Yazid came to him and asked:

"Do you need anything, Abu Ayyub?"

"Convey my salaams to the Muslim armies and say to them:

'Abu Ayyub urges you to penetrate deeply into the territory of the enemy as far as you can go, that you should carry him with you and that you should bury him under your feet at the walls of Constantinople.'" Then he breathed his last.

The Muslim army fulfilled the desire of the companion of the Messenger of God. They pushed back the enemy's forces in attack after attack until they reached the walls of Constantinople. There they buried him.

(The Muslims beseiged the city for four years but eventually had to withdraw after suffering heavy losses.)

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari

Scanned from "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

In the Waddan valley which connects Makkah with the outside world, lived the tribe of Ghifar. The Ghifar existed on the meagre offerings of the trade caravans of the Quraysh which plied between Syria and Makkah. It is likely that they also lived by raiding these caravans when they were not given enough to satisfy their needs.

Jundub ibn Junadah, nicknamed Abu Dharr, was a member of this tribe.

He was known for his courage, his calmness and his far sightedness and also for the repugnance he felt against the idols which his people worshipped. He rejected the silly religious beliefs and the religious corruption in which the Arabs were engaged.

While he was in the Waddan desert, news reached Abu Dharr that a new Prophet had appeared in Makkah. He really hoped that his appearance would help to change the hearts and minds of people and lead them away from the darkness of superstition. Without wasting much time, he called his brother, Anis, and said to him:

"Go to Makkah and get whatever news you can of this man who claims that he is a Prophet and that revelation comes to him from the heavens. Listen to some of his sayings and come back and recite them to me."

Anis went to Makkah and met the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him. He listened to what he had to say and returned to the Waddan desert. Abu Dharr met him and anxiously asked for news of the Prophet.

"I have seen a man," reported Anis, "who calls people to noble qualities and there is no mere poetry in what he says."

"What do people say about him?" asked Abu Dharr.

"They say he is a magician, a soothsayer and a poet."

"My curiosity is not satisfied. I am not finished with this matter. Will you look after my family while I go out and examine this prophet's mission myself?"

"Yes. But beware of the Makkans."

On his arrival at Makkah, Abu Dharr immediately felt very apprehensive and he decided to exercise great caution. The Quraysh were noticeably angry over the denunciation of their gods. Abu Dharr heard of the terrible violence they were meting out to the followers of the Prophet but this was what he expected. He therefore refrained from asking anyone about Muhammad not knowing whether that person might be a follower or an enemy.

At nightfall, he lay down in the Sacred Mosque. Ali ibn abi Talib passed by him and, realising that he was a stranger, asked him to come to his house. Abu Dharr spent the night with him and in the morning took his water pouch and his bag containing provisions and returned to the Mosque. He had asked no questions and no questions were asked of him.

Abu Dharr spent the following day without getting to know the Prophet. At evening he went to the Mosque to sleep and Ali again passed by him and said:

"Isn't it time that a man knows his house?"

Abu Dharr accompanied him and stayed at his house a second night. Again no one asked the other about anything.

On the third night, however, Ali asked him, "Aren't you going to tell me why you came to Makkah?"

"Only if you will give me an undertaking that you will guide me to what I seek."

Ali agreed and Abu Dharr said:

"I came to Makkah from a distant place seeking a meeting with the new Prophet and to listen to some of what he has to say."

Ali's face lit up with happiness as he said, "By God, he is really the Messenger of God," and he went on telling Abu Dharr more about the Prophet and his teaching. Finally, he said:

"When we get up in the morning, follow me wherever I go. If I see anything which I am afraid of for your sake, I would stop as if to pass water. If I continue, follow me until you enter where I enter."

Abu Dharr did not sleep a wink the rest of that night because of his intense longing to see the Prophet and listen to the words of revelation. In the morning, he followed closely in Ali's footsteps until they were in the presence of the Prophet.

"As-salaamu alayka yaa Rasulullah, (Peace be on you, O Messenger of God)," greeted Abu Dharr.

" Wa alayka salaamullahi wa rahmatuhu wa barakaatuhu (And on you be the peace of God, His mercy and His blessings)," replied the Prophet.

Abu Dharr was thus the f1rst person to greet the Prophet with the greeting of Islam. After that, the greeting spread and came into general use.

The Prophet, peace be on him, welcomed Abu Dharr and invited him to Islam. He recited some of the Qur'an for him. Before long, Abu Dharr pronounced the Shahadah, thus entering the new religion (without even leaving his place). He was among the first persons to accept Islam.

Let us leave Abu Dharr to continue his own story . . .

After that I stayed with the Prophet in Makkah and he taught me Islam and taught me to read the Qur'an. Then he said to me, "Don't tell anyone in Makkah about your acceptance of Islam. I fear that they will kill you."

"By Him in whose hands is my soul, I shall not leave Makkah until I go to the Sacred Mosque and proclaim the call of Truth in the midst of the Quraysh," vowed Abu Dharr.

The Prophet remained silent. I went to the Mosque. The Quraysh were sitting and talking. I went in their midst and called out at the top of my voice, "O people of Quraysh, I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

My words had an immediate effect on them. They jumped up and said, "Get this one who has left his religion." They pounced on me and began to beat me mercilessly. They clearly meant to kill me. But Abbas ibn Abdulmuttalib, the uncle of the Prophet, recognised me. He bent over and protected me from them. He told them:

"Woe to you! Would you kill a man from the Ghifar tribe and your caravans must pass through their territory?"

They then released me. I went back to the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and when he saw my condition, he said, "Didn't I tell you not to announce your acceptance of Islam?"

"O Messenger of God," I said, "It was a need I felt in my soul and I fulfilled it."

"Go to your people," he commanded, "and tell them what you have seen and heard. Invite them to God. Maybe God will bring them good through you and reward you through them. And when you hear that I have come out in the open, then come to me."

I left and went back to my people. My brother came up to me and asked, "What have you done?" I told him that I had become a Muslim and that I believed in the truth of Muhammad's teachings.

"I am not averse to your religion. In fact, I am also now a Muslim and a believer," he said.

We both went to our mother then and invited her to Islam.

"I do not have any dislike for your religion. I accept Islam also," she said.

From that day this family of believers went out tirelessly inviting the Ghifar to God and did not flinch from their purpose. Eventually a large number became Muslims and the congregational Prayer was instituted among them.

Abu Dharr remained in his desert abode until after the Prophet had gone to Madinah and the battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq had been fought. At Madinah at last, he asked the Prophet to be in his personal service. The Prophet agreed and was pleased with his companionship and service. He sometimes showed preference to Abu Dharr above others and whenever he met him he would pat him and smile and show his happiness.

After the death of the Prophet, Abu Dharr could not bear to stay in Madinah because of grief and the knowledge that there was to be no more of his guiding company. So he left for the Syrian desert and stayed there during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar.

During the caliphate of Uthman, he stayed in Damascus and saw the Muslims' concern for the world and their consuming desire for luxury. He was saddened and repelled by this. So Uthman asked him to come to Madinah. At Madinah he was also critical of the people's pursuit of worldly goods and pleasures and

they were critical in turn of his reviling them. Uthman therefore ordered that he should go to Rubdhah, a small village near Madinah. There he stayed far away from people, renouncing their preoccupation with worldly goods and holding on to the legacy of the Prophet and his companions in seeking the everlasting abode of the Hereafter in preference to this transitory world.

Once a man visited him and began looking at the contents of his house but found it quite bare. He asked Abu Dharr:

"Where are your possessions?"

"We have a house yonder (meaning the Hereafter)," said Abu Dharr, "to which we send the best of our possessions."

The man understood what he meant and said:

"But you must have some possessions so long as you are in this abode."

"The owner of this abode will not leave us in it," replied Abu Dharr.

Abu Dharr persisted in his simple and frugal life to the end. Once the amir of Syria sent three hundred dinars to Abu Dharr to meet his needs. He returned the money saying, "Does not the amir of Syria find a servant more deserving of it than I?"

In the year 32 AH, the self-denying Abu Dharr passed away. The Prophet, peace be upon him, had said of him:

"The earth does not carry nor the heavens cover a man more true and faithful than Abu Dharr."

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Abu Musa Al-Ashari

When he went to Basrah as governor of the city, he called the inhabitants to a meeting and addressed them: "The Amir al-Muminin, Umar, has sent me to you to teach you the Book of your Lord and the Sunnah of His Prophet and to clean your streets for you."

People were taken aback when they heard these words. They could easily understand that one of the responsibilities of a Muslim ruler was to instruct people in their religion. However, that one of his duties should be to clean streets was something new and surprising to them.

Who was this governor of whom the Prophet's grandson, al-Hasan, may God be pleased with him said: "There was no rider who came to Basrah who was better for its people than he."

His real name was Abdullah ibn Qays but he was and continues to be known as Abu Musa al-Ashari. He left his native land, the Yemen, for Makkah immediately after hearing that a Prophet had appeared there who was a man of rare insight, who called people to the worship of One God and who insisted on the highest standards of morality.

At Makkah, he stayed in the company of the Prophet and gained knowledge and guidance. He returned to his country to propagate the word of God and spread the mission of the noble Prophet, peace be on him. We have no further news of him for more than a decade. Then just after the end of the Khaybar expedition he came to the Prophet in Madinah. His arrival there coincided with that of Jaffar ibn Abi Talib and other Muslims from Abyssinia and the Prophet welcomed them all with joy and happiness.

This time Abu Musa did not come alone. He came with more than fifty persons from the Yemen all of whom had accepted Islam. Among them were his two brothers, Abu Ruhm and Abu Burdah. The Prophet referred to the whole group as the "Asharis". In fact he sometimes referred to all Yemenis as Asharis after Abu Musa al-Ashari. He often praised the group for their soft and tender-hearted nature and held them up to the rest of his companions as a high example of good behavior. He once said of them:

"If the Asharis go on an expedition or if they only have a little food among them, they would gather all they have on one cloth and divide it equally among themselves. They are thus from me and I am from them."

Abu Musa soon became highly esteemed in the Muslim community. He had many great qualities. He was a faqih endowed with intelligence and sound judgement and was ranked as one of the leading judges in the early Muslim community. People used to say: "The judges in this ummah are four: Umar, Ali, Abu Musa and Zayd ibn Thabit."

Abu Musa had a natural, uncomplicated disposition. He was by nature a trusting person and expected people to deal with him on the basis of trust and sincerity.

In the field of jihad, he was a warrior of great courage

and endurance and skill. The Prophet said of him: "The master of horsemen is Abu Musa."

"Abu Musa's insight and the soundness of his judgment did not allow him to be deceived by an enemy in battle. In battle conditions he saw situations with complete clarity and executed his actions with a firm resolve.

Abu Musa was in command of the Muslim army traversing the lands of the Sasanian Empire. At Isfahan, the people came to him and offered to pay the jizyah (in return for military protection) to make peace and avoid fighting. However. they were not sincere in their offer and merely wanted an opportunity to mount a treacherous attack on the Muslims. Abu Musa however saw through their real intentions and he remained on the alert. Thus when the Isfahanis launched their attack, the Muslim leader was not caught off-guard, He engaged them in battle and before midday of the following day, he had won a decisive victory.

In the major campaigns against the powerful Sasanian Empire Abu Musa's role was outstanding. In the great Battle of Tustar itself, he distinguished himself as a military commander.

The Persian commander, Hormuzan, had withdrawn his numerous forces to the strongly fortified city of Tustar. The Caliph Umar did not underestimate the strength of the enemy and he mobilized powerful and numerous force to confront Hormuzan. Among the Muslim forces were dedicated veterans like Ammar ibn Yasir, al-Baraa ibn Malik and his brother Anas, Majra'a al-Bakri and Salamah ibn Rajaa. Umar appointed Abu Musa as commander of the army.

So well fortified was Tustar that it was impossible to take it by storm. Several attempts were made to breach the walls but these proved unsuccessful. There followed a long and difficult siege which became even more testing and agonizing for the Muslims when, as we saw in the story of al-Baraa ibn Malik, the Persians began throwing down iron chains from the walls of the fortress at the ends of which were fastened red-hot iron hooks. Muslims were caught by these hooks and were pulled up either dead or in the agony of death.

Abu Musa realized that the increasingly unbearable impasse could only be broken by a resort to stratagem. Fortunately, at this time a Persian defected to the Muslim side and Abu Musa induced him to return behind the walls of the fortified city and use whatever artful means he could to open the city's gates from within. With the Persian he sent a special force of hand-picked men. They succeeded well in their task, opened the gates and made way for Abu Musa's army. Within hours the Persians were subdued.

In spite of the fact that Abu Musa was a strong and powerful warrior, he often left the battlefield transformed into a penitent, weeping person. At such times, he would read the Quran in a voice that profoundly stirred the souls of all who listened to him. Concerning his moving and melodious recitation of the Quran the Prophet, peace be on him, had said: "Abu Musa has indeed been given one of the flutes of the people of David."

Also, Umar, may god be pleased with him, often summoned Abu Musa and asked him to recite from the Book of God, saying:

"Create in us a yearning for our Lord, O Abu Musa." As a mark of his dedication to the Quran, Abu Musa was one of the few companions who had prepared a mushaf a written collection of the revelations.

Abu Musa only participated in fighting against the armies of Mushrikin, armies which tried to oppose

the religion of God and extinguish the light of faith. When fighting broke out among Muslims, he fled from such conflict anti never look any part in it. Such was his stand in the conflict that arose between Ali and Muawiyah. It is in relation to this conflict and in particular his role as an adjudicator that the name of Abu Musa al-Ashari is most widely known.

Briefly, Abu Musa's position appeared to be that of a 'neutral.' He saw Muslims killing each other and felt that if the situation were to continue the very future of the Muslim ummah would be threatened. To start off with a clean slate. the Khalifah Ali should give up the position and Muawiyah should relinquish any claim to be Khalifah and the Muslims should be given a free choice to elect whoever they wanted as Khalifah.

It was of course true that Imam Ali held the position of Khalifah legitimately and that any unlawful revolt could only have as its object the challenging and overturning of the rule of law. However, developments had gone so far, the dispute had become so bloody and there seemed to be no end in sight except further bloodshed, that a new approach to a solution seemed the only hope of avoiding further bloodshed and continuous civil war.

When Imam Ali accepted the principle of arbitration, he wanted Abdullah ibn Abbas to represent him. But an influential section of his followers insisted on Abu Musa. Their reason for so doing was that Abu Musa had not taken part in the dispute from its beginning. Instead he had kept aloof from both parties when he despaired of bringing about an understanding and a reconciliation and putting an end to the fighting. Therefore, they felt, he was the most suitable person to be the arbitrator.

Imam Ali had no reason to doubt the devotion of Abu Musa to Islam and his truthfulness and sincerity. But he knew the shrewdness of the other side and their likely resort to ruses and treachery. He also knew that Abu Musa in spite of his understanding and his knowledge despised deceit and conspiracies and always wanted to deal with people on the basis of trust and honesty, not through cunning. Ali therefore feared that Abu Musa would be deceived by others and that arbitration would end up with the victory of guile over honesty and that the situation would end up being more perilous than it was.

Adjudication nonetheless began with Abu Musa representing the side of Ali and Amr ibn al-Aas representing the side of Muawiyah. A possible version of their historic conversation has been recorded in the book "Al-Akhbar at-Tiwal" by Abu Hanifah Ad-Daynawawi as follows:

Abu Hurayrah

From Alim® Online

"An Abi Hurayrata, radiyallahu anhu, qal.' qala rasul Allahi, sallallahu alayhi wa sailam..."

Through this phrase millions of Muslims from the early history of Islam to the present have come to be familiar with the name Abu Hurayrah. In speeches and lectures, in Friday khutbahs and seminars, in the books of hadith and sirah, fiqh and ibadah, the n ame Abu Hurayrah is mentioned in this fashion:

"On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him who said: The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said... ".

Through his Prodigious efforts, hundreds of ahadith or sayings of the Prophet were transmitted to later generations. His is the foremost name in the roll of hadith transmitters. Next to him comes the names of such companions as Abdullah the son of Umar, Anas the son of Malik, Umm al-Mumininin Aishah, Jabir ibn Abdullah and Abu Said al-Khudri all of whom transmitted over a thousand sayings of the Prophet.

Abu Hurayrah became a Muslim at the hands of at-Tufayl ibn Amr the chieftain of the Daws tribe to which he belonged. The Daws lived in the region of Tihamah which stretches along the coast of the Red Sea in southern Arabia. When at-Tufayl returned to his village after meeting the Prophet and becoming a Muslim in the early years of his mission, Abu Hurayrah was one of the first to respond to his call. He was unlike the majority of the Daws who remained stubborn in their old beliefs for a long time.

When at-Tufayl visited Makkah again, Abu Hurayrah accompanied him. There he had the honor and privilege of meeting the noble Prophet who asked him: "What is your name?"

"Abdu Shams - Servant of a Sun," he replied.

"Instead, let it be Abdur-Rahman - the Servant of the Beneficent Lord," said the Prophet.

"Yes, Abdur-Rahman (it shall be) O Messenger of God," he replied. However, he continued to be known as Abu Hurayrah, "the kitten man", literally "the father of a kitten" because like the Prophet he was fond of cats and since his childhood often had a cat to play with.

Abu Hurayrah stayed in Tihamah for several years and it was only at the beginning of the seventh year of the Hijrah that he arrived in Madinah with others of his tribe. The Prophet had gone on a campaign to Khaybar. Being destitute, Abu Hurayrah took up h is place in the Masjid with other of the Ahl as-Suffah. He was single, without wife or child. With him however was his mother who was still a mushrik. He longed, and prayed, for her to become a Muslim but she adamantly refused. One day, he invited her to have faith in God alone and follow His Prophet but she uttered some words about the Prophet which saddened him greatly. With tears in his eyes, he went to the noble Prophet who said to him:

"What makes you cry, O Abu Hurayrah?"

"I have not let up in inviting my mother to Islam but she has always rebuffed me. Today, I invited her again and I heard words from her which I do not like. Do make supplication to God Almighty to make the heart of Abu Hurayrah's mother incline to Isl am."

The Prophet responded to Abu Hurayrah's request and prayed for his mother. Abu Hurayrah said: "I went home and found the door closed. I heard the splashing of water and when I tried to enter my mother said: "Stay where you are, O Abu Hurayrah." And after putting on her clothes, she said, "Enter!" I entered and she said: "I testify that there is no god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger."

"I returned to the Prophet, peace be on him, weeping with joy just as an hour before I had gone weeping from sadness and said: "I have good news, O Messenger of Allah. God has responded to your prayer and guided the mother of Abu Hurayrah to Islam."

Abu Hurayrah loved the Prophet a great deal and found favor with him. He was never tired of looking at the Prophet whose face appeared to him as having all the radiance of the sun and he was never tired of listening to him. Often he would praise God for h is good fortune and say: "Praise be to God Who has guided Abu Hurayrah to Islam." Praise be to God Who has taught Abu Hurayrah the Quran."

"Praise be to God who has bestowed on Abu Hurayrah the companionship of Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace." On reaching Madinah, Abu Hurayrah set his heart on attaining knowledge. Zayd ibn Thabit the notable companion of the Prophet reported : "While Abu Hurayrah and I and another friend of mine were in the Masjid praying to God Almighty and performing dhikr to Him, the Messenger of God appeared. He came towards us and sat among us. We became silent and he said: "Carry on with what you were d oing."

"So my friend and I made a supplication to God before Abu Hurayrah did and the Prophet began to say Ameen to our dua.

"Then Abu Hurayrah made a supplication saying: "O Lord, I ask You for what my two companions have asked and I ask You for knowledge which will not be forgotten."

"The Prophet, peace be on him, said: 'Ameen.' "We then said: 'And we ask Allah for knowledge which will not be forgotten, and the Prophet replied: 'The Dawsi youth has asked for this before you." "With his formidable memory, Abu Hurayrah set out to memorize in the four years that he spent with the Prophet, the gems of wisdom that emanated from his lips. He realized that he had a great gift and he set about to use it to the full in the service of I slam.

He had free time at his disposal. Unlike many of the Muhajirin he did not busy himself' in the market-places, with buying and selling. Unlike many of the Ansar, he had no land to cultivate nor crops to tend. He stayed with the Prophet in Madinah and went with him on journeys and expeditions.

Many companions were amazed at the number of hadith he had memorized and often questioned him on when he had heard a certain hadith and under what circumstances.

Once Marwan ibn al-Hakam wanted to test Abu Hurayrah's power of memory. He sat with him in one room and behind a curtain he placed a scribe, unknown to Abu Hurayrah, and ordered him to write down whatever Abu Hurayrah said. A year later, Marwan called Ab u Hurayrah again and asked him to recall

the same ahadith which the scribe had recorded. It was found that he had forgotten not a single word.

Abu Hurayrah was concerned to teach and transmit the ahadith he had memorized and knowledge of Islam in general. It is reported that one day he passed through the suq of Madinah and naturally saw people engrossed in the business of buying and selling.

"How feeble are you, O people of Madinah!" he said.

"What do you see that is feeble in us, Abu Hurayrah?" they asked.

"The inheritance of the Messenger of God, peace be on him, is being distributed and you remain here! Won't you go and take your portion?"

"Where is this, O Abu Hurayrah?" they asked.

"In the Masjid," he replied.

Quickly they left. Abu Hurayrah waited until they returned. When they saw him, they said: "O Abu Hurayrah, we went to the Masjid and entered and we did not see anything being distributed."

"Didn't you see anyone in the Masjid?" he asked.

"O yes, we saw some people performing Salat, some people reading the Quran and some people discussing about what is halal and what is haram."

"Woe unto you," replied Abu Hurayrah," that is the inheritance of Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace."

Abu Hurayrah underwent much hardship and difficulties as a result of his dedicated search for knowledge. He was often hungry and destitute. He said about himself:

"When I was afflicted with severe hunger, I would go to a companion' of the Prophet and asked him about an ayah of the Quran and (stay with him) learning it so that he would take me with him to his house and give food. "

One day, my hunger became so severe that I placed a stone on my stomach. I then sat down in the path of the companions. Abu Bakr passed by and I asked him about an ayah of the Book of God. I only asked him so that he would invite me but he didn't.

"Then Umar ibn al-Khattab passed by me and I asked him about an ayah but he also did not invite me. Then the Messenger of God, peace be on him, passed by and realized that I was hungry and said: "Abu Hurayrah!"

"At your command" I replied and followed him until we entered his house. He found a bowl of milk and asked his family: "From where did you get this?"

"Someone sent it to you" they replied.

He then said to me: "O Abu Hurayrah, go to the Ahl as-Suffah and invite them." Abu Hurayrah did as he was told and they all drank from the milk.

The time came of course when the Muslims were blessed with great wealth and material goodness of every description. Abu Hurayrah eventually got his share of wealth. He had a comfortable home, a wife and child. But this turn of fortune did not change his personality. Neither did he forget his days of destitution. He would "I grew up as an orphan and I emigrated as a poor and indigent person. I used to take food for my stomach from Busrah bint Ghazwan. I served people when they returned from journeys and l ed their camels when they set out. Then God caused me to marry her (Busrah). So praise be to God who has strengthened his religion and made Abu Hurayrah an imam." (This last statement is a reference to the time when he became governor of Madinah.)

Much of Abu Hurayrah's time would be spent in spiritual exercises and devotion to God. Qiyam al-Layl staying up for the night in prayer and devotion - was a regular practice of his family including his wife and his daughter. He would stay up for a third o f the night, his wife for another third and his daughter for a third. In this way, in the house of Abu Hurayrah no hour of the night would pass without ibadah, dhikr and Salat.

During the caliphate of Umar, Umar appointed him as governor of Bakrain. Umar was very scrupulous about the type of persons whom he appointed as governors. He was always concerned that his governors should live simply and frugally and not acquire much wea lth even though this was through lawful means.

In Bahrain, Abu Hurayrah became quite rich. Umar heard of this and recalled him to Madinah. Umar thought he had acquired his wealth through unlawful means and questioned him about where and how he had acquired such a fortune. Abu Hurayrah replied: "From b reeding horses and gifts which I received."

"Hand it over to the treasury of the Muslims," ordered Umar.

Abu Hurayrah did as he was told and raised his hands to the heavens and prayed: "O Lord, forgive the Amir al-Muminin." Subsequently, Umar asked him to become governor once again but he declined. Umar asked him why he refused and he said:

"So that my honor would not be besmirched, my wealth taken and my back beaten."

And he added: "And I fear to judge without knowledge and speak without wisdom."

Throughout his life Abu Hurayrah remained kind and courteous to his mother. Whenever he wanted to leave home, he would stand at the door of her room and say: As-salaamu alaykum, yaa ummataah, wa rahrnatullahi wa barakatuhu, peace be on you, mother, and th e mercy and blessings of God." She would reply: "Wa alayka-s salaam, yaa bunayya, wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu - And on you be peace, my son, and the mercy and blessings of God." Often, he would also say: "May God have mercy on you as you cared for me wh en I was small," and she would reply: "May God have mercy on you as you delivered me from error when I was old." Abu Hurayrah always encouraged other people to be kind and good to their parents.

One day he saw two men walking together, one older than the other. He asked the younger one: "What is this man to you?"

"My father," the person replied.

"Don't call him by his name. Don't walk in front of him and don't sit before him," advised Abu

Hurayrah.

Muslims owe a debt of gratitude to Abu Hurayrah for helping to preserve and transmit the valuable legacy of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. He died in the year 59 AH when he was seventy-eight years old.

Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith

Rarely can one find a closer bond between two persons such as existed between Muhammad the son of Abdullah and Abu Sufyan the son of al-Harith. (This Abu Sufyan of course was not the same as Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, the powerful Quraysh chieftain.)

Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith was born about the same time as the blessed Prophet. They resembled each other a great deal. They grew up together and for a time lived in the same household. Abu Sufyan was a cousin of the Prophet. His father, al-Harith, was the brother of Abdullah; both were sons of Abd al-Muttalib.

Abu Sufyan was also a foster-brother of the Prophet. He was for a short time nursed by the lady Halimah who looked after the young Muhammad in the tough and bracing atmosphere of the desert.

In their childhood and youth, Abu Sufyan and Muhammad were close and intimate friends. So close were they, that one might naturally have expected Abu Sufyan to have been among the first to respond to the call of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and follow wholeheartedly the religion of truth. But this was not to be, at least not for many, many years.

From the time the Prophet made public his call to Islam and first issued the warning to members of his clan about the dangers of continuing in their existing state of unbelief, injustice and immorality, the fire of envy and hatred erupted in the breast of Abu Sufyan. The bonds of kinship snapped. Where once there was love and friendship, there was now revulsion and hate. Where once there was brotherhood, there was now resistance and opposition.

Abu Sufyan at this time was renowned as one of the best fighters and horsemen of the Quraysh and one of their most accomplished poets. He used both sword and tongue in the battle against the Prophet and his mission. All his energies were mobilized in denouncing Islam and persecuting the Muslims. In whatever battle the Quraysh fought against the Prophet and whatever torture and persecution they meted out to the Muslims Abu Sufyan had a part to play. He composed and recited verses attacking and vilifying the Prophet.

For twenty years almost this rancor consumed his soul. His three others brothers - Nawfal, Rabiah and Abdullah, had all accepted Islam but not he.

In the eighth year after the Hijrah, however, shortly before the Islamic liberation of Makkah, Abu Sufyan's position began to shift, as he explains: "When the movement of Islam became vigorous and well-established and news spread of the Prophet's advance to liberate Makkah, the world caved in on me. I felt trapped. 'Where shall I go?' I asked myself. 'And with whom?' To my wife and children, I said:

'Get ready to leave Makkah. Muhammad's advance is imminent. I shall certainly be killed. I shall be given no quarter should the Muslims recognize me.'

'Now,' replied my family, 'you must realize that Arabs and non-Arabs have pledged their obedience to Muhammad and accepted his religion. You are still bent on opposing him whereas you might have been

the first to support and help him.'

They continued trying to influence me to re-consider my attitude to Muhammad's religion and to re-awaken in me affection towards him. Eventually God opened my heart to Islam. I got up and said to my servant, Madhkur: 'Get ready a camel and a horse for us.' I took my son Jafar with me and we galloped with great speed towards al-Abwa between Makkah and Madinah. I had learnt that Muhammad had camped there. As I approached the place, I covered my face so that no one could recognize and kill me before I could reach the Prophet and announce my acceptance of Islam directly to him.

Slowly, I proceeded on foot while advance groups of Muslims headed towards Makkah. I avoided their path out of fear that one of the Prophet's companions would recognize me. I continued in this fashion until the Prophet on his mount came into my view. Coming out into the open, I went straight up to him and uncovered my face. He looked at me and recognized me. But, he turned his face away. I moved to face him once again. He avoided looking at me and again turned away his face. This happened repeatedly.

I had no doubt - as I stood there facing the Prophet that he would have been pleased with my acceptance of Islam and that his companions would have rejoiced at his happiness. When, however, the Muslims saw the Prophet, peace be on him, avoiding me, they too looked at me and shunned me. Abu Bakr met me and violently turned away. I looked at Umar ibn al-Khattab, my eyes pleading for his compassion, but I found him even more harsh than Abu Bakr. In fact, Umar went on to incite one of the Ansar against me.

'O enemy of God,' lashed out the Ansari, 'you are the one who persecuted the Messenger of God, peace be on him, and tortured his companions. You carried your hostility towards the Prophet to the ends of the earth'.

The Ansari went on censuring me in a loud voice while other Muslims glared at me in anger. At that point, I saw my uncle, al-Abbas, and went to him seeking refuge.

'O uncle,' I said. 'I had hoped that the Prophet, peace be on him, would be happy about my acceptance of Islam because of my kinship to him and because of my position of honor among my people. You know what his reaction has been. Speak to him then on my behalf that he may be pleased with me.'

'No, by God,' replied my uncle. 'I shall not speak to him at all after I have seen him turning away from you except if an opportunity presents itself. I do honor the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, and I stand in awe of him.'

'O uncle, to whom then will you abandon me?' I pleaded.

'I do not have anything for you except what you have heard,' he said.

Anxiety and grief took hold of me. I saw Ali ibn Talib soon after and spoke to him about my case. His response was the same as that of my uncle. I went back to my uncle and said to him: 'O uncle, if you cannot soften the heart of the Prophet towards me, then at least restrain that man from denouncing me and inciting others against me.'

'Describe him to me,' said my uncle. I described the man to him and he said: 'That is Nuayman ibn al-Harith an-Najjari.' He sent for Nuayman and said to him: 'O Nuayman! Abu Sufyan is the cousin of the Prophet and my nephew. If the Prophet is angry with him today, he will be pleased with him another

day. So leave him...' My uncle continued trying to placate Nuayman until the latter relented and said: 'I shall not spurn him anymore.'

"When the Prophet reached al-Jahfah (about four days journey from Makkah), I sat down at the door of his tent. My son Jafar stood beside me. As he was leaving his tent, the Prophet saw me and averted his face. Yet, I did not despair of seeking his pleasure. Whenever he camped at a place, I would sit at his door and my son Jafar would stand in front of me... I continued in this fashion for some time. But the situation became too much for me and I became depressed. I said to myself:

'By God, either the Prophet, peace be on him, shows he is pleased with me or I shall take my son and go wandering through the land until we die of hunger and thirst.'

When the Prophet came to hear of this, he relented and, on leaving his tent, he looked more gently towards me then before. I so much hoped that he would smile."

Eventually the Prophet relented and told Abu Sufyan, "There is now no blame on you." He entrusted the newcomer to Islam to Ali ibn Abi Talib saying: "Teach your cousin how to perform wudu and about the Sunnah. Then bring him back to me." When Ali returned, the Prophet said:

"Tell all the people that the Messenger of God is pleased with Abu Sufyan and that they should be pleased with him."

Abu Sufyan continued: "The Prophet then entered Makkah and I too entered in his entourage. He went to the Sacred Mosque and I also went, trying my best to remain in his presence and not separate from him on any account...

Later, at the Battle of Hunayn. the Arabs put together an unprecedented force against the Prophet, peace be on him... They were determined to deal a mortal blow to Islam and the Muslims.

The Prophet went out to confront them with a large number of his companions. I went out with him and when I saw the great throngs of mushrikin, I said: 'By God. today, I shall atone for all my past hostility towards the Prophet. peace be on him, and he shall certainly see on my part what pleases God and what pleases him.'

When the two forces met, the pressure of the mushrikin on the Muslims was severe and the Muslims began to lose heart. Some even began to desert and terrible defeat stared us in the face. However, the Prophet stood firm in the thick of battle astride his mule "Ash-Shahba" like a towering mountain, wielding his sword and fighting for himself and those around him... I jumped from my horse and fought beside him. God knows that I desired martyrdom beside the Messenger of God. My uncle, al-Abbas, took the reins of the Prophet's mule and stood at his side. I took up my position on the other side. With my right hand I fended off attacks against the Prophet and with my left I held on to my mount.

When the Prophet saw my devastating blows on the enemy, he asked my uncle: 'Who's this?' 'This is your brother and cousin. Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith. Be pleased with him. O Messenger of God.'

'I have done so and God has granted forgiveness to him for all the hostility he has directed against me.'

My heart soared with happiness. I kissed his feet in the stirrup and wept. He turned towards me and said: 'My brother! Upon my life! Advance and strike!'

The words of the Prophet spurred me on and we plunged into the positions of the mushrikin until they were routed and fled in every direction."

After Hunayn, Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith continued to enjoy the good pleasure of the Prophet and the satisfaction of being in his noble company. But he never looked the Prophet directly in the eye nor focussed his gaze on his face out of shame and embarrassment for his past hostility towards him.

Abu Sufyan continued to feel intense remorse for the many and dark days he had spent trying to extinguish the light of God and refusing to follow His message. Henceforth, his days and nights he would spend reciting the verses of the Quran. seeking to understand and follow its laws and profit by its admonitions. He shunned the world and its adornments and turned to God with every fibre of his being. Once the Prophet. peace be on him, saw him entering the mosque and asked his wife: "Do you know who is this, Aishah?" "No, O Messenger of God." she replied. This is my cousin. Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith. See, he is the first to enter the masjid and the last to leave. His eyes do not leave his shoelace."

When the Prophet, peace be on him, passed away, Abu Sufyan felt intense grief and wept bitterly.

During the caliphate of Umar, may God be pleased with him, Abu Sufyan felt his end drawing near. One day people saw him in al-Baqi, the cemetery not far from the Prophet's mosque where many Sahabah are buried. He was digging and fashioning a grave. They were surprised. Three days later, Abu Sufyan was lying stretched out at home His family stood around weeping but he said: "Do not weep for me. By God, I did not commit any wrong since I accepted Islam." With that, he passed away.

Abu Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah

Scanned from: Companions of The Prophet, Vol.1, By Abdul Wahid Hamid

His appearance was striking. He was slim and tall. His face was bright and he had a sparse beard. It was pleasing to look at him and refreshing to meet him. He was extremely courteous and humble and quite shy. Yet in a tough situation he would become strikingly serious and alert, resembling the flashing blade of a sword in his severity and sharpness.

He was described as the "Amin" or Custodian of Muhammad's community. His full name was Aamir ibn Abdullah ibn al-Jarrah. He was known as Abu Ubaydah. Of him Abdullah ibn Umar, one of the companions of the Prophet, said:

"Three persons in the tribe of Quraysh were most prominent, had the best character and were the most modest. If they spoke to you, they would not deceive you and if you spoke to them, they would not accuse you of Iying: Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Uthman ibn Affan and Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah."

Abu Ubaydah was one of the first persons to accept Islam. He became a Muslim one day after Abu Bakr. In fact, it was through Abu Bakr that he became a Muslim. Abu Bakr took him, Abdur Rahman ibn Auf, Uthman ibn Maz'un and al-Arqam ibn abi al Arqam to the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and together they declared their acceptance of the Truth. They were thus the first pillars on which the great edifice of Islam was built.

Abu Ubaydah lived through the harsh experience, which the Muslims went through in Makkah, from beginning to end. With the early Muslims, he endured the insults and the violence, the pain and the sorrow of that experience. In every trial and test he remained firm and constant in his belief in God and His prophet. One of the most harrowing experiences he had to go through, however, was at the battle of Badr.

Abu Ubaydah was in the vanguard of the Muslim forces, fighting with might and main and as someone who was not at all afraid of death. The Quraysh cavalry were extremely wary of him and avoided coming face to face with him. One man in particular, however, kept on pursuing Abu Ubaydah wherever he turned and Abu Ubaydah tried his best to keep out of his way and avoid an encounter with him.

The man plunged into the attack. Abu Ubaydah tried desperately to avoid him. Eventually the man succeeded in blocking Abu Ubaydah's path and stood as a barrier between him and the Quraysh. They were now face to face with each other. Abu Ubaydah could not contain himself any longer. He struck one blow to the man's head. The man fell to the ground and died instantly.

Do not try to guess who this man was. It was, as stated earlier, one of the most harrowing experiences that Abu Ubaydah had to go through, how harrowing, it is almost impossible to imagine. The man in fact was Abdullah ibn al-Jarrah, the father of Abu Ubaydah!

Abu Ubaydah obviously did not want to kill his father but in the actual battle between faith in God and polytheism, the choice open to him was profoundly disturbing but clear. In a way it could be said that he did not kill his fatherÑhe only killed the polytheism in the person of his father.

It is concerning this event that God revealed the following verses of the Qur'an:

"You will not find a people believing in God and the Last Day making friends with those who oppose God and His messenger even if these were their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their clan. God has placed faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Him. He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which streams flow that they may dwell therein. God is well pleased with them and they well pleased with Him. They are the party of God. Is not the party of God the successful ones?" *(Surah al-Mujadilah 58:22)*

The response of Abu Ubaydah at Badr when confronted by his father was not unexpected. He had attained a strength of faith in God, devotion to His religion and a level of concern for the ummah of Muhammad to which many aspired.

It is related by Muhammad ibn Ja'far, a Companion of the Prophet, that a Christian delegation came to the Prophet and said, "O Abu-l Qasim, send one of your companions with us, one in whom you are well pleased, to judge between us on some questions of property about which we disagree among ourselves. We have a high regard for you Muslim people."

"Come back to me this evening," replied the Prophet, "and I will send with you one who is strong and trustworthy.';

Umar ibn al-Khattab heard the Prophet saying this and later said:

"I went to the Zuhr (midday) Prayer early hoping to be the one who would fit the description of the Prophet. When the Prophet had finished the Prayer, he began looking to his right and his left and I raised myself so that he could see me. But he continued looking among us until he spotted Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah. He called him and said, 'Go with them and judge among them with truth about that which they are in disagreement." And so Abu Ubaydah got the appointment."

Abu Ubaydah was not only trustworthy. He displayed a great deal of strength in the discharge of his trust. This strength was shown on several occasions.

One day the Prophet despatched a group of his Sahabah to meet a Quraysh caravan. He appointed Abu Ubaydah as amir (leader) of the group and gave them a bag of dates and nothing else as provisions. Abu Ubaydah gave to each man under his command only one date every day. He would suck this date just as a child would suck at the breast of its mother. He would then drink some water and this would suffice him for the whole day.

On the day of Uhud when the Muslims were being routed, one of the mushrikeen started to shout, "Show me Muhammad, show me Muhammad." Abu Ubaydah was one of a group of ten Muslims who had encircled the Prophet to protect him against the spears of the Mushrikeen.

When the battle was over, it was found that one of the Prophet's molar teeth was broken, his forehead was bashed in and two discs from his shield had penetrated into his cheeks. Abu Bakr went forward with the intention of extracting these discs but Abu Ubaydah said, "Please leave that to me."

Abu Ubaydah was afraid that he would cause the Prophet pain if he took out the discs with his hand. He bit hard into one of the discs. It was extracted but one of his incisor teeth fell to the ground in the process. With his other incisor, he extracted the other disc but lost that tooth also. Abu Bakr remarked, "Abu Ubaydah is the best of men at breaking incisor teeth!"

Abu Ubaydah continued to be fully involved in all the momentous events during the Prophet's lifetime. After the beloved Prophet had passed away, the companions gathered to choose a successor at the Saqifah or meeting place of Banu Sa'aadah. The day is known in history as the Day of Saqifah. On this day, Umar ibn al-Khattab said to Abu Ubaydah, "Stretch forth your hand and I will swear allegiance to you for I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him say, 'Every ummah has an amin (custodian) and you are the amin of this ummah.' "

"I would not," declared Abu Ubaydah, "put myself forward in the presence of a man whom the Prophet, upon whom be peace, commanded to lead us in Prayer and who led us right until the Prophet's death." He then gave bay'ah (the oath of allegiance) to Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. He continued to be a close adviser to Abu Bakr and his strong supporter in the cause of truth and goodness. Then came the caliphate of Umar and Abu Ubaydah also gave him his support and obedience. He did not disobey him in any matter, except one.

The incident happened when Abu Ubaydah was in Syria leading the Muslim forces from one victory to another until the whole of Syria was under Muslim control. The River Euphrates lay to his right and Asia Minor to his left.

It was then that a plague hit the land of Syria, the like of which people had never experienced before. It devastated the population. Umar despatched a messenger to Abu Ubaydah with a letter saying:

"I am in urgent need of you. If my letter reaches you at night I strongly urge you to leave before dawn. If this letter reaches you during the day, I strongly urge you to leave before evening and hasten to me.

When Abu Ubaydah received Umar's letter, he said, "I know why the Amir al-Mu'mineen needs me. He wants to secure the survival of someone who, however, is not eternal." So he wrote to Umar:

"I know that you need me. But I am in an army of Muslims and I have no desire to save myself from what is afflicting them. I do not want to separate from them until God wills. So, when this letter reaches you, release me from your command and permit me to stay on."

When Umar read this letter tears filled his eyes and those who were with him asked, "Has Abu Ubaydah died, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?"

"No," said he, "But death is near to him."

Umar's intuition was not wrong. Before long, Abu Ubaydah became afflicted with the plague. As death hung over him, he spoke to his army:

"Let me give you some advice which will cause you to be on the path of goodness always.

"Establish Prayer. Fast the month of Ramadan. Give Sadaqah. Perform the Hajj and Umrah. Remain united and support one another. Be sincere to your commanders and do not conceal anything from them. Don't let the world destroy you for even if man were to live a thousand years he would still end up with this fate that you see me in."

"Peace be upon you and the mercy of God."

Abu Ubaydah then turned to Muadh ibn Jabal and said, "O Muadh, perform the prayer with the people (be their leader)." At this, his pure soul departed.

Muadh got up and said: "O people, you are stricken by the death of a man. By God, I don't know whether I have seen a man who had a more righteous heart, who was further from all evil and who was more sincere to people than he. Ask God to shower His mercy on him and God will be merciful to you."

Abu-d Dardaa

From Alim® Online

Early in the morning, Abu-d Dardaa awoke and went straight to his idol which he kept in the best part of his house. He greeted it and made obeisance to it. Then he anointed it with the best perfume from his large shop and put on it a new raiment of beauti ful silk which a merchant had brought to him the day before from Yemen.

When the sun was high in the sky he left his house for his shop. On that day the streets and alleys of Yathrib were crowded with the followers of Muhammad returning from Badr. With them were several prisoners of war. Abu-d Dardaa surveyed the crowds and t hen went up to a Khazraji youth and asked about the fate of Abdullah ibn Rawahah.

"He was put through the most severe tests in the battle," "but he emerged safely..."

Abu-d Dardaa was clearly anxious about his close friend, Abdullah ibn Rawahah. Everyone in Yathrib knew the bond of brotherhood which existed between the two men from the days of Jahiliyyah, before the coming of Islam to Yathrib. When Islam came to the city, Ibn Rawahah embraced it but Abu-d Dardaa rejected it. This however did not rupture the relationship between the two. Abdullah kept on visiting Abu-d Dardaa and tried to make him! see the virtues, the benefits and the excellence of Islam. But with e very passing day, while Abu-d Dardaa remained a mushrik, Abdullah felt more sad and concerned.

Abu-d Dardaa arrived at his shop and sat cross-legged on a high chair. He began trading-buying and selling and giving instructions to his assistants unaware of what was going on at his house. For at that very time, Abdullah ibn Rawahah had gone to the hou se determined on a course of action. There, he saw that the main gate was open. Umm ad-Dardaa was in the courtyard and he said to her:

"As-salaamu alayki - Peace be unto you, servant of God."

"Wa alayka-s salaam - And unto you be peace, O brother of Abu-d Dardaa."

"Where is Abu-d Dardaa?" he asked. "He has gone to his shop. It won't be tong before he returns." "Would you allow me to come in?" "Make yourself at home," she said and went about busying herself with her household chores and looking after her children.

Abdullah ibn Rawahah went to the room where Abu-d Dardaa kept his idol. He took out an adz which he had brought with him and began destroying the idol while saying:

"Isn't everything batil which is worshipped besides Allah?"

When the idol was completely smashed, he left the house. Abu-d Dardaa's wife entered the room shortly afterwards and was aghast at what she saw. She smote her cheeks in anguish and said: "You have brought ruin to me, Ibn Rawahah." When Abu-d Dardaa retur ned home, he saw his wife sitting at the

door of the room where he kept his idol. She was weeping loudly and she looked absolutely terrified. "What's wrong with you?" he asked.

"Your brother Abdullah ibn Rawahab visited us in your absence and did with your idols what you see." Abu-d Dardaa looked at the broken idol and was horrified. He was consumed with anger and determined to take revenge. Before long however his anger subside d and thoughts of avenging the idol disappeared. Instead he reflected on what had happened and said to himself:

"If there was any good in this idol, he would have defended himself against any injury."

He then went straight to Abdullah and together they went to the Prophet, peace be on him. There he announced his acceptance of Islam. He was the last person in his district to become a Muslim.

From this time onwards, Abu-d Dardaa devoted himself completely to Islam. Belief in God and His Prophet animated every fibre of his being. He deeply regretted every moment he had spent as a mushrik and the opportunities he had lost to do good. He realize d how much his friends had learnt about siam in the preceding two or three years, how much of the Quran they had memorized and the opportunities they had to devote themselves to God and His Prophet. He made up his mind to expend every effort, day and nigh t to try to make up for what he had missed. Ibadah occupied his days and his nights. His search for knowledge was restless. Much time he spent memorizing the words of the Quran and trying to understand the profundity of its message. When he saw that busin ess and trade disturbed the sweetness of his ibadah and kept him away from the circles of knowledge, he reduced his involvement without hesitation or regret. Someone asked him why he did this and he replied:

"I was a merchant before my pledge to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. When I became a Muslim, I wanted to combine trade (tijarah) and worship (ibadah) but I did not achieve what I desired. So I abandoned trade and inclined tow ards ibadah.

"By Him in whose hand is the soul of Abu-d Dardaa, what I want to have is a shop near the door of the masjid so that I would not miss any Salat with the congregation. Then I shall sell and buy and make a modest profit every day."

"I am not saying," said Abu-d Dardaa to his questioner, "that Allah Great and Majestic is He has prohibited trade, but I want to be among those whom neither trade nor selling distracts form the remembrance of God ."

Abu-d Dardaa did not only become less involved in trade but he abandoned his hitherto soft and luxurious life-style. He ate only what was sufficient to keep him upright and he wore clothes that was simple and sufficient to cover his body.

Once a group of Muslims came to spend the night with him. The night was bitterly cold. He gave them hot food which they welcomed. He himself then went to sleep but he did not give them any blankets. They became anxious wondering how they were going to s leep on such a cold night. Then one of them said: "I will go and talk to him." "Don't bother him," said another.

However, the man went to Abu-d Dardaa and stood at the door of his room. He saw Abu-d Dardaa lying down. His wife was sitting near to him. They were both wearing light clothing which could not protect them from the cold and they had no blankets. Abu-d Dardaa said to his guest: "If there was anything we would have sent it to you."

During the caliphate of Umar, Umar wanted to appoint Abu-d Dardaa as a governor in Syria. Abu-d Dardaa refused. Umar persisted and then Abu-d Dardaa said:

"If you are content that I should go to them to teach them the Book of their Lord and the Sunnah of their Prophet and pray with them, I shall go."

Umar agreed and Abu-d Dardaa left for Damascus. There he found the people immersed in luxury and soft living. This appalled him. He called the people to the masjid and spoke to them:

"O people of Damascus! You are my brethren in religion, neighbors who live together and helpers one to another against enemies. "O people of Damascus! What is it that prevents you from being affectionate towards me and responding to my advice while I do not seek anything from you. Is it right that I see your learned ones departing (from this world) while the ignorant among you are not learning. I see that you incline towards such things which Allah has made you answerable for and you abandon what He has commanded you to do.

"Is it reasonable that I see you gathering and hoarding what you do not eat, and erecting buildings in which you do not live, and holding out hopes for things you cannot attain.

"Peoples before you have amassed wealth, made great plans and had high hopes. But it was not long before what they had amassed was destroyed, their hopes dashed and their houses turned into graves. Such were the people of Aad, O people of Damascus. They filled the earth with possessions and children.

"Who is there who will purchase from me today the entire legacy of Aad for two dirhams?"

The people wept and their sobs could be heard from outside the masjid. From that day, Abu-d Dardaa began to frequent the meeting places of the people of Damascus. He moved around in their market-places, teaching, answering questions and trying to arouse a nyone who had become careless and insensitive. He used every opportunity and every occasion to awaken people, to set them on the right path.

Once he passed a group of people crowding around a man. They began insulting and beating the man. He came up to them and said: "What's the matter?" "This is a man who has committed a grave sin," they replied.

"What do you think you would do if he had fallen into a well?" asked Abu-d Dardaa. "Wouldn't you try to get him out?" "Certainly," they said. "Don't insult him and don't beat him. Instead admonish him and make him aware of the consequences of what he had done. Then give praise to God Who has preserved you from falling into such a sin." "Don't you hate him?" they asked Abu-d Dardaa.

"I only detest what he had done and if he abandons such practice, he is my brother." The man began to cry and publicly announced his repentance.

A youth once came up to Abu-d Dardaa and said: "Give me advice, O companion of the Messenger of God," and Abu-d Dardaa said to him:

"My son, remember Allah in good times and He will remember you in times of misfortune.

"My son, be knowledgeable, seek knowledge, be a good listener and do not be ignorant for you will be

ruined.

"My son, let the masjid be your house for indeed I heard the Messenger of God say: The masjid is the house of every God-conscious person and God Almighty has guaranteed serenity, comfort, mercy and staying on the path leading to His pleasure, to those for whom masjids are their houses."

On another occasion, there was a group of people sitting in the street, chatting and looking at passers-by. Abu-d Dardaa came up to them and said:

"My sons, the monastery of a Muslim man is his house in which he controls himself and lowers his gaze. Beware of sitting in market-places because this fritters away time in vain pursuits."

While Abu-d Dardaa was in Damascus, Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, its governor, asked him to give his daughter in marriage to his (Muawiyah's) son, Yazid. Abu-d Dardaa did not agree. Instead he gave his daughter in marriage to a young man from among the poor whose character and attachment to Islam pleased him. People heard about this and began talking and asking: Why did Abu-d Dardaa refuse to let his daughter marry Yazid? The question was put to Abu-d Dardaa himself and he said: "I have only sought to do wh at is good for ad-Dardaa." That was his daughter's name. "How?" enquired the person.

"What would you think of ad-Dardaa if servants were to stand in her presence serving her and if she were to find herself in palaces the glamour of which dazzled the eyes? What would become of her religion then?"

While Abu-d Dardaa was still in Syria, the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab came on an inspection tour of the region. One night he went to visit Abu-d Dardaa at his home. There was no light in the house. Abu-d Dardaa welcomed the Caliph and sat him down. The tw o men conversed in the darkness. As they did so, Umar felt Abu-d Dardaa's "pillow" and realized it was an animal's saddle. He touched the place where Abu-d Dardaa lay and knew it was just small pebbles. He also felt the sheet with which he covered himse lf and was astonished to find it so flimsy that it couldn't possibly protect him from the cold of Damascus. Umar asked him:

"Shouldn't I make things more comfortable for you? Shouldn't I send something for you?"

"Do you remember, Umar," said Abu-d Dardaa, "a hadith which the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, told us?" "What is it?" asked Umar. "Did he not say: Let what is sufficient for anyone of you in this world be like the provisions of a rider? " "Yes," said Umar. "And what have we done after this, O Umar?" asked Abu-d Dardaa.

Both men wept no doubt thinking about the vast riches that had come the way of Muslims with the expansion of Islam and their preoccupation with amassing wealth and worldly possessions. With deep sorrow and sadness, both men continued to reflect on this si tuation until the break of dawn.

From Alim® Online

Abu-l Aas ibn ar-Rabiah

Abu-l Aas belonged to the Abd ash-Shams clan of the Quraysh. He was in the prime of his youth, handsome and very impressive looking. He was the epitome of Arab chivalry and was endowed with all the characteristics of pride, manliness and generosity. He took great pride in the traditions of his ancestors.

Abu-l Aas inherited the Quraysh love for trade. The Quraysh of course were known to be masters of the two annual trading expeditions. the winter expedition to the south, to Yemen. and the summer expedition to the north. to Syria. These two expeditions are mentioned in the Quran in the chapter named after the Quraysh.

The caravans of Abu-l Ads always plied between Makkah and Syria. Each caravan was made up of two hundred men and a hundred camels. People would entrust their wealth and their goods to him to trade on their behalf because of his skill as a merchant. his honesty and his trustworthiness.

The maternal aunt of Abu-l Aas was Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, the wife of Muhammad ibn Abdullah. She treated him like a mother would her own son, with love and affection. Muhammad too was extremely fond of him.

The years went by quickly in the household of Muhammad and Khadijah. Zanaib, their eldest daughter, soon grew up and blossomed forth like a lovely flower. She was much sought after in marriage by the sons of respectable Makkan nobles. And why not? She was one of the most distinguished Makkan girls in lineage and social standing. She was blessed with the most honorable father and mother. And she had the finest morals and behavior.

Which one of these scions of Makkan nobility would win her hand? Abu-l Aas ibn Rabi'ah was the one who did.

Abu-l Aas and Zaynab were only married a few years when the Divine light of Islam radiated over Makkah. Muhammad, the father of Zaynab, was now the Prophet of God, sent to convey the religion of guidance and truth. He was commanded to convey the message of Islam first to his family and nearest relatives. The first women to believe in him and accept Islam were his wife Khadijah and his daughters Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah. Fatimah was very young at the time.

Zaynab's husband however did not like leaving the religion of his forefathers and he refused to adopt the religion which his wife now followed although he was completely devoted to her and loved her dearly with a pure and sincere love.

Before long, the confrontation between the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Quraysh developed and grew bitter. The Quraysh felt that it was intolerable for their sons to remain married to Muhammad's daughters. They also considered that it would be an embarrassing and difficult situation for Muhammad if his daughters were to be returned to his household. So they went to Abu-l Aas and said:

"Divorce your wife, Abu-l Aas, and send her back to her father's house. We shall then marry you to any

of the most charming and noble women of the Quraysh you desire."

"No, by God," said Abu-l Aas firmly. "I shall not divorce my wife and I do not wish to have in her place any woman in all the world."

Muhammad's other two daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were divorced by their husbands and returned to his home. The Prophet in fact was delighted when they came back to him and he had hoped that Abu-l Aas would also return Zaynab to him except that at that time he had no power to compel him to do so. The law forbidding the marriage of a Muslim woman to a nonbelieving man was not yet in force.

The Prophet, peace be on him, migrated to Madinah and his mission became stronger. The Quraysh felt even more threatened by him ,red went out to confront him at Badr. Abu-l Aas was compelled to go along with the Quraysh army. He did not really have d desire to fight the Muslims nor did he feel any inclination to join them. But his position among the Quraysh- one of honor and trust - impelled him to go along with their campaign against Muhammad. The battle of Badr ended in d terrible defeat for the Quraysh and the forces of shirk. Some were killed, some were taken prisoner and some managed to escape. Among those, who were taken prisoner was Abu-l Aas, the husband of Zaynab.

The Prophet fixed amounts for the ransom of the prisoners of war varying from one thousand to four thousand dirhams, according to the wealth and social standing of the prisoner. Quraysh messengers went to and fro between Makkah and Madinah bearing the ransom money to free their relatives held in Madinah. Zaynab sent her messenger to Madinah bearing the ransom demand to free her husband. The ransom amount included a necklace which her mother, Khadijah, had given to her before she died. When the Prophet saw the necklace, his face at once became covered with a veil of sadness and he felt a surge of tenderness for his daughter. He turned to his companions and said:

"Zaynab has sent this amount to ransom Abu-l Aas. If you see fit to set free her prisoner and return her possession to her, then do so."

"Yes," his companions agreed. "We shall do whatever we can to soothe your eyes and make you happy."

The Prophet set one condition on Abu-l Aas before he freed him, that he should send his daughter Zaynab to him without delay.

As soon as he reached Makkah, Abu-l Aas began making arrangements to carry out his promise. He ordered his wife to prepare herself for the journey and told her that her father's messengers were waiting for her just outside Makkah. He prepared provisions and a mount for her and instructed his brother, Amr ibn ar-Rabi'ah, to accompany her and hand her over personally to the Prophet's emissaries.

Amr slung his bow over his shoulders, took up his quiver of arrows, placed Zaynab in her hawdaj and left Makkah with her in the broad light of day, in full view of the Quraysh.

The Quraysh were furious. They pursued Zaynab and Amr until they caught up with them. Zaynab was scared. Amr stood poised with his bow and arrow and shouted:

"By God, if any man come near to her, I would plunge this arrow in his neck". Amr was known to be an excellent marksman.

Abu Sufyan ibn Hath, who had by this time joined the Quraysh group, went up to Amr and said: "Son of

my brother, put away your arrow and let me talk to you."

This Amr did and Abu Sufyan went on: "What you have done is not prudent. You left with Zaynab in full view of the people. All the Arabs know the disasters we suffered at Badr at the hands of her father, Muhammad. If you leave with his daughter in the open as you have done, the tribes would accuse us of cowardice and they would say that we have been humiliated. Return with her and ask her to stay in her husband's house for a few days so that people could say that we brought her back. Thereafter you can take her away quietly and secretly from us and take her to her father. We have no need to detain her."

Amr agreed to this and Zaynab returned to Makkah. A few days later, in the middle of the night Amr took Zaynab and handed her over to the Prophet's emissaries just as his brother had instructed.

After the departure of his wife, Abu-l Aas stayed on in Makkah for several years. Then, shortly before the conquest of Makkah, he left for Syria on a trading mission. On the return journey from Syria his caravan consisted of some one hundred camels and one hundred and seventy men.

As the caravan approached Madinah, a detachment of Muslims took them by surprise. They impounded the camels and took the men as captives to the Prophet. Abu-l Aas however managed to escape. During the night which was pitch black, Abu-l Aas entered Madinah fearful and alert. He searched around until he came to Zaynab's house. He asked her for protection and she gave it to him.

At dawn, the Prophet, peace be on him, came out to the masjid to perform the Dawn Prayer. He stood erect in the mihrab and said "Allahu Akbar" to begin the Prayer. The Muslims behind him did the same. At that point Zaynab shouted from the women's section of the masjid:

"O people! I am Zaynab the daughter of Muhammad. I have given protection to Abu-l Aas. Do give him your protection also."

When the Prayer was finished, the Prophet turned to the congregation and said: "Have you heard what I heard?" "Yes, Messenger of Allah," they replied.

"By Him in Whose hand is my soul, I knew nothing of this until I heard what you heard. He is asking protection from the Muslims."

Back at home the Prophet said to his daughter: "Prepare a place of rest for Abu-l Aas and let him know that you are not lawful for him." He then summoned the men of the expeditionary force which had taken the camels and the men of the caravan and said to them:

"You have taken the possessions of this man. If you are kind to him and return his property, we would be pleased. If however you do not agree then the goods is booty sanctioned by God which you have a right to."

"We would certainly return his possessions to him, Messenger of God," they replied and when Abu-l Aas came to collect his goods, they said to him:

"You belong to the Quraysh nobility. You are the nephew of the Messenger of God and his son-in-law. Would you accept Islam? We would hand over all this wealth to you. You would then have for your own enjoyment whatever wealth and possessions the Makkans entrusted to you, and stay with us here in Madinah."

"What an evil thing you are asking me do, to enter a new religion while committing an act of treachery!" Abu-I Aas retorted.

Abu-l Aas returned to Makkah with the caravan and handed over all the wealth and goods to their rightful owners. Then he asked:

"O people of Quraysh! Is there any money left with me belonging to any one of you which he has not taken?"

"No," came the reply. "And may God bless you with goodness. We have indeed found you noble and trustworthy."

Then Abu-I Aas announced: "Since I have now handed over to you what is rightfully yours, I now declare that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. By God, the only thing that prevented me from declaring my acceptance of Islam while I was with Muhammad in Madinah was my fear that you would think that I did so only to appropriate your wealth. Now that I have discharged my trust in this matter, I now declare that I am a Muslim..."

Abu-l Aas then left for Madinah where the Prophet received him hospitably and returned his wife to him. The Prophet used to say about him: "He spoke to me and was truthful to me. He made promises to me and remained faithful to his word."

Adiyy Ibn Hatim

From Alim® Online

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, an Arab king made the first positive moves to Islam after years of feeling hatred for it. He drew closer to faith (iman) after opposing and combating it. And he finally pledged allegiance to the Prophet, peace be on him, after his adamant refusal to do so.

He was Adiyy, son of the famous Hatim at-Taai who was known far and wide for his chivalry and fabulous generosity. Adiyy inherited the domain of his father and was confirmed in the position by the Tayy people. Part of his strength lay in the fact that a quarter of any amount they obtained as booty from raiding expeditions had to be given to him.

When the Prophet announced openly his call to guidance and truth and Arabs from one region after another accepted his teachings, Adiyy saw in his mission a threat to his position and leadership. Although he did not know the Prophet personally, and had nev er seen him, he developed strong feelings of enmity towards him. He remained antagonistic to Islam for close upon twenty years until at last God opened his heart to the religion of truth and guidance.

The way in which Adiyy became a Muslim is a remarkable story and he is perhaps the best person to relate it. He said:

"There was no man among the Arabs who detested God's Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, more than I, when I heard about him. I was then a man of status and nobility. I was a Christian. From my people I took a fourth of their booty as was th e practice of other Arab kings.

When I heard of the Messenger of God, peace be on him, I hated him. When his mission grew in strength and when his power increased and his armies and expeditionary forces dominated east and west of the land of Arabs, I said to a servant of mine who looked after my camels:

'Get ready a fat camel for me which is easy to ride and tether it close to me. If you hear of an army or an expeditionary force of Muhammad coming towards this land, let me know.' One evening, my servant came to me and said: "Yaa Mawlaya! What you intend ed to do on the approach of Muhammad's cavalry to your land, do it now." 'Why? May your mother lose you!'

'I have seen scouts searching close to the habitations. I asked about them and was told that they belonged to the army of Muhammad,' he said.

'Bring the camel which I ordered you to get ready.' I said to him. I got up then and there, summoned my household (including) my children and ordered them to evacuate the land we loved. We headed in the direction of Syria to join people of our own faith among the Christians and settle among them.

We left in too much haste for me to gather together our entire household. When I took stock of our situation, I discovered that part of my family was missing. I had left my own sister in our Najd homelands together with the rest of the Tayy people. I did not have any means to return to her. So I went on with those who were with me until I reached Syria and took up residence there among people of my own religion. As for my sister, what I feared for her happened.

News reached me while I was in Syria that the forces of Muhammad entered our habitations and took my sister together with a number of other captives to Yathrib. There she was placed with other captives in a compound near the door of the Masjid.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, passed by her. She stood up before him and said: 'Yaa Rasulullah! My father is dead and my guardian is not here. Be gracious to me and God will be gracious to you!

'And who is your guardian?' asked the Prophet.

'Adiyy ibn Hatim.' she said.

'The one who fled from God and His Prophet?' he asked. He then left her and walked on.

On the following day, the same thing happened. She spoke to him just as she did the day before and he replied in the same manner. The next day, the same thing happened and she despaired of getting any concession from him for he did not say anything. Then a man from behind him indicated that she should stand up and talk to him. She therefore stood up and said:

'O Messenger of God! My father is dead and my guardian is absent. Be gracious to me and God will be gracious to you.' I have agreed he said. Turning to those about him, he instructed: likewise `Let her go for her father loved noble ways, and God loves th em.'

'I want to join my family in Syria,' she said.

"But don't leave in a hurry," said the Prophet, "until you find someone you can trust from your people who

could accompany you to Syria. If you find a trustworthy person, let me know."

When the Prophet left, she asked about the man who had suggested that she speak to the Prophet and was told that he was Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God be pleased with him. She stayed in Yathrib until a group arrived among whom was someone she could trust. So she went the Prophet and said:

'O Messenger of God! A group of my people have come to me and among them is one I can trust who could take me to my family.'

The Prophet, peace be on him, gave her fine clothes and an adequate sum of money. He also gave her a camel and she left with the group.

Thereafter we followed her progress gradually and waited for her return. We could hardly believe what we heard about Muhammad's generosity towards her in spite of my attitude to him. By God, I am a leader of my people. When I beheld a woman in herhawdaj c oming towards us, I said: 'The daughter of Hatim! It's she! It's she!'

When she stood before us, she snapped sharply at me and said: 'The one who severs the tie of kinship is a wrongdoer. You took your family and your children and left the rest of your relations and those whom you ought to have protected.'

'Yes, my sister,' I said, 'don't say anything but good.' I tried to pacify her until she was satisfied. She told me what had happened to her and it was as I had heard. Then I asked her, for she was an intelligent and

judicious person:

"What do you think of the mission of this man (meaning Muhammad peace be on him)?" "I think, by God, that you should join him quickly." she said. "If he is a Prophet, file one who hastens towards him would enjoy his grace. And if he is a king, you would not be disgraced in his sight while you are as you are."

I immediately prepared myself for travel and set off to meet the Prophet in Madinah without any security and without any letter. I had heard that he had said: 'I certainly wish that God will place the hand of Adiyy in nay hand.'

I went up to him. He was in the Masjid. I greeted him and he said: 'Who is the man? 'Adiyy ibn Hatim,' I said. He stood up for me, took me by the hand and set off towards his home.

By God, as he was walking with me towards his house, a weak old woman met him. With her was a young child. She stopped him and began talking to him about a problem. I was standing (all the while). I said to myself: 'By God, this is no king.'

He then took me by the hand and went with me until we reached his home. There he got a leather cushion

filled with palm fibre, gave it to me said: 'Sit on this!'

I felt embarrassed before him and said: 'Rather, you sit on it.' 'No, you,' he said.

I deferred and sat on it. The Prophet, peace be on him, sat on the floor because there was no other cushion. said to myself:

'By God, this is not the manner of a king!' He then turned to me and said: 'Yes, Adiyy ibn Hatim! Haven't you been a "Rukusi" professing a religion between Christianity and Sabeanism?' 'Yes,' I replied.

'Did you not operate among your people on the principle of exacting from them a fourth, taking from them what your religion does not allow you?'

'Yes,' I said, and I knew from that he was a Prophet sent (by God). Then he said to me: 'Perhaps, O Adiyy, the only thing that prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the destitution of the Muslims and their poverty. By God, the time i s near when wealth would flow among them until no one could be found to take it.

'Perhaps, O Adiyy, the only thing that prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the small number of Muslims and their numerous foe. By God, the time is near when you would hear of the woman setting out from Qadisiyyah on her camel until she reaches this house, not fearing anyone except Allah.

'Perhaps what prevents you from entering this religion is that you only see that sovereignty and power rest in the hands of those who are not Muslims. By God, you will soon hear of the white palaces of the land of Babylon opening up for them and the treas ures of Chosroes the son of Hormuz fall to their lot.'

'The treasures of Chosroes the son of Hormuz?' I asked (incredulously). 'Yes, the treasures of Chosroes the son of Hormuz,' he said. Thereupon, I professed the testimony of truth, and declared my acceptance

of Islam."

One report says that when Adiyy saw the simplicity of the Prophet's life-style, he said to him: "I testify that you do not seek high office in this world nor corruption," and he announced his acceptance of Islam. Some people observed the Prophet's treatm ent of Adiyy and said to him:

"O Prophet of God! We have seen you do something which you have not done to any other." "Yes," replied the Prophet. "This is a man of stature among his people. If such a person come to you, treat him honorably."

Adiyy ibn Hatim, may God be pleased with him, lived for a long time. He later said: "Two of the things (which the Prophet spoke of) came to pass and there remained a third. By God, it would certainly come to pass. "I have seen the woman leaving Qadisiyya h on her camel fearing nothing until she arrived at this house (of the Prophet in Madinah).

"I myself was in the vanguard of the cavalry which descended on the treasures of Chosroes and took them. And I swear by God that the third event will be realized." Through the will of God, the third statement of the Prophet, on him be choicest blessings a nd peace, came to pass during the time of the devout and ascetic Khalifah, Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz. Wealth flowed among the Muslims so much so that when the town-criers called on people throughout the Muslim domain to come and collect Zakat, no one was foun d in need to respond.

Aishah Bint Abi Bakr

From Alim® Online

The life of Aishah is proof that a woman can be far more learned than men and that she can be the teacher of scholars and experts. Her life is also proof that a woman can exert influence over men and women and provide them with inspiration and leadership . Her life is also proof that the same woman can be totally feminine and be a source of pleasure, joy and comfort to her husband.

She did not graduate from any university there were no universities as such in her day. But still her utterances are studied in faculties of literature, her legal pronouncements are studied in colleges of law and her life and works are studied and resear ched by students and teachers of Muslim history as they have been for over a thousand years.

The bulk of her vast treasure of knowledge was obtained while she was still quite young. In her early childhood she was brought up by her father who was greatly liked and respected for he was a man of wide knowledge, gentle manners and an agreeable presen ce. Moreover he was the closest friend of the noble Prophet who was a frequent visitor to their home since the very early days of his mission.

In her youth, already known for her striking beauty and her formidable memory, she came under the loving care and attention of the Prophet himself. As his wife and close companion she acquired from him knowledge and insight such as no woman has ever acqui red.

Aishah became the Prophet's wife in Makkah when she was most likely in the tenth year of her life but her wedding did not take place until the second year after the Hijrah when she was about fourteen or fifteen years old. Before and after her wedding she maintained a natural jollity and innocence and did not seem at all overawed by the thought of being wedded to him who was the Messenger of God whom all his companions, including her own mother and father, treated with such love and reverence as they gave to no one else.

About her wedding, she related that shortly before she was to leave her parent's house, she slipped out into the courtyard to play with a passing friend:

"I was playing on a see-saw and my long streaming hair was dishevelled," she said. "They came and took me from my play and made me ready."

They dressed her in a wedding-dress made from fine red-striped cloth from Bahrain and then her mother took her to the newly-built house where some women of the Ansar were waiting outside the door. They greeted her with the words "For good and for happines s may all be well!" Then, in the presence of the smiling Prophet, a bowl of milk was brought. The Prophet drank from it himself and offered it to Aishah. She shyly declined it but when he insisted she did so and then offered the bowl to her sister Asma wh o was sitting beside her. Others also drank of it and that was as much as there was of the simple and solemn occasion of their wedding. There was no wedding feast.

Marriage to the Prophet did not change her playful ways. Her young friends came regularly to visit her

in her own apartment.

"I would be playing with my dolls," she said, "with the girls who were my friends, and the Prophet would come in and they would slip out of the house and he would go out after them and bring them back, for he was pleased for my sake to have them there." S ometimes he would say "Stay where you are" before they had time to leave, and would also join in their games. Aishah said: "One day, the Prophet came in when I was playing with the dolls and he said: 'O Aishah, whatever game is this?' 'It is Solomon's hor ses,' I said and he laughed." Sometimes as he came in he would screen himself with his cloak so as not to disturb Aishah and her friends.

Aishah's early life in Madinah also had its more serious and anxious times. Once her father and two companions who were staying with him fell ill with a dangerous fever which was common in Madinah at certain seasons. One morning Aishah went to visit him and was dismayed to find the three men lying completely weak and exhausted. She asked her father how he was and he answered her in verse but she did not understand what he was saying. The two others also answered her with lines of poetry which seemed to her to be nothing but unintelligible babbling. She was deeply troubled and went home to the Prophet saying:

"They are raving, out of their minds, through the heat of the fever." The Prophet asked what they had said and was somewhat reassured when she repeated almost word for word the lines they had uttered and which made sense although she did not fully underst and them then. This was a demonstration of the great retentive power of her memory which as the years went by were to preserve so many of the priceless sayings of the Prophet.

Of the Prophet's wives in Madinah, it was clear that it was Aishah that he loved most. From time to time, one or the other of his companions would ask:

"O Messenger of God, whom do you love most in the world?" He did not always give the same answer to this question for he felt great love for many for his daughters and their children, for Abu Bakr, for Ali, for Zayd and his son Usamah. But of his wives t he only one he named in this connection was Aishah. She too loved him greatly in return and often would seek reassurance from him that he loved her. Once she asked him: "How is your love for me?"

"Like the rope's knot," he replied meaning that it was strong and secure. And time after time thereafter, she would ask him: "How is the knot?" and he would reply: "Ala haaliha in the same condition."

As she loved the Prophet so was her love a jealous love and she could not bear the thought that the Prophet's attentions should be given to others more than seemed enough to her. She asked him:

"O Messenger of God, tell me of yourself. If you were between the two slopes of a valley, one of which had not been grazed whereas the other had been grazed, on which would you pasture your flocks?"

"On that which had not been grazed," replied the Prophet. "Even so," she said, "and I am not as any other of your wives. "Everyone of them had a husband before you, except myself." The Prophet smiled and said nothing. Of her jealousy, Aishah would say in later years:

"I was not, jealous of any other wife of the Prophet as I was jealous of Khadijah, because of his constant mentioning of her and because God had commanded him to give her good tidings of a mansion in Paradise of precious stones. And whenever he sacrifice d a sheep he would send a fair portion of it to those who had been her intimate friends. Many a time I said to him: "It is as if there had never been any

other woman in the world except Khadijah."

Once, when Aishah complained and asked why he spoke so highly of "an old Quraysh woman", the Prophet was hurt and said: "She was the wife who believed in me when others rejected me. When people gave me the lie, she affirmed my truthfulness. When I stood f orsaken, she spent her wealth to lighten the burden of my sorrow.."

Despite her feelings of jealousy which nonetheless were not of a destructive kind, Aishah was really a generous soul and a patient one. She bore with the rest of the Prophet's household poverty and hunger which often lasted for long periods. For days on e nd no fire would be lit in the sparsely furnished house of the Prophet for cooking or baking bread and they would live merely on dates and water. Poverty did not cause her distress or humiliation; self-sufficiency when it did come did not corrupt her styl e of life.

Once the Prophet stayed away from his wives for a month because they had distressed him by asking of him that which he did not have. This was after the Khaybar expedition when an increase of riches whetted the appetite for presents. Returning from his sel f-imposed retreat, he went first to Aishah's apartment. She was delighted to see him but he said he had received Revelation which required him to put two options before her. He then recited the verses:

"O Prophet! Say to your wives: If you desire the life of this world and its adornments, then come and I will bestow its goods upon you, and I will release you with a fair release. But if you desire God and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, th en verily God has laid in store for you an immense reward for such as you who do good."

Aishah's reply was:

"Indeed I desire God and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter," and her response was followed by all the others.

She stuck to her choice both during the lifetime of the Prophet and afterwards. Later when the Muslims were favored with enormous riches, she was given a gift of one hundred thousand dirhams. She was fasting when she received the money and she distributed the entire amount to the poor and the needy even though she had no provisions in her house. Shortly after, a maidservant said to her: "Could you buy meat for a dirham with which to break your fast?"

"If I had remembered, I would have done so," she said. The Prophet's affection for Aishah remained to the last. During his final illness, it was to Aishah's apartment that he went at the suggestion of his wives. For much of the time he lay there on a cou ch with his head resting on her breast or on her lap. She it was who took a toothstick from her brother, chewed upon it to soften it and gave it to the Prophet. Despite his weakness, he rubbed his teeth with it vigorously. Not long afterwards, he lost con sciousness and Aishah thought it was the onset of death, but after an hour he opened his eyes.

Aishah it is who has preserved for us these dying moments of the most honoured of God's creation, His beloved Messenger may He shower His choicest blessings on him.

When he opened his eyes again, Aishah remembered Iris having said to her: "No Prophet is taken by death until he has been shown his place in Paradise and then offered the choice, to live or die."

"He will not now choose us," she said to herself. Then she heard him murmur: "With the supreme communion in Paradise, with those upon whom God has showered His favor, the Prophets, the martyrs

and the righteous..." Again she heard him murmur: "O Lord, wit h the supreme communion," and these were the last words she heard him speak. Gradually his head grew heavier upon her breast, until others in the room began to lament, and Aishah laid his head on a pillow and joined them in lamentation.

In the floor of Aishah's room near the couch where he was lying, a grave was dug in which was buried the Seal of the Prophets amid much bewilderment and great sorrow.

Aishah lived on almost fifty years after the passing away of the Prophet. She had been his wife for a decade. Much of this time was spent in learning and acquiring knowledge of the two most important sources of God's guidance, the Quran and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Aishah was one of three wives (the other two being Hafsah and Umm Salamah) who memorized the Revelation. Like Hafsah, she had her own script of the Quran written after the Prophet had died.

So far as the Ahadith or sayings of the Prophet is concerned, Aishah is one of four persons (the others being Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah ibn Umar, and Anas ibn Malik) who transmitted more than two thousand sayings. Many of these pertain to some of the most in timate aspects of personal behavior which only someone in Aishah's position could have learnt. What is most important is that her knowledge of hadith was passed on in written form by at least three persons including her nephew Urwah who became one of the greatest scholars among the generation after the Companions.

Many of the learned companions of the Prophet and their followers benefitted from Aishah's knowledge. Abu Musa al-Ashari once said: "If we companions of the Messenger of God had any difficulty on a matter, we asked Aishah about it."

Her nephew Urwah asserts that she was proficient not only in fiqh but also in medicine (tibb) and poetry. Many of the senior companions of the Prophet came to her to ask for advice concerning questions of inheritance which required a highly skilled mathem atical mind. Scholars regard her as one of the earliest fuqaha of Islam along with persons like Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali and Abdullah ibn Abbas. The Prophet referring to her extensive knowledge of Islam is reported to have said: "Learn a portion of your r eligion (din) from this red colored lady." "Humayra" meaning "Red-coloured" was an epithet given to Aishah by the Prophet.

Aishah not only possessed great knowledge but took an active part in education and social reform. As a teacher she had a clear and persuasive manner of speech and her power of oratory has been described in superlative terms by al-Ahnaf who said: "I have heard speeches of Abu Bakr and Umar, Uthman and Ali and the Khulafa up to this day, but I have not heard speech more persuasive and more beautiful from the mouth of any person than from the mouth of Aishah."

Men and women came from far and wide to benefit from her knowledge. The number of women is said to have been greater than that of men. Besides answering enquiries, she took boys and girls, some of them orphans, into her custody and trained them under her care and guidance. This was in addition to her relatives who received instruction from her. Her house thus became a school and an academy.

Some of her students were outstanding. We have already mentioned her nephew Urwah as a distinguished reporter of hadith. Among her women pupils is the name of Umrah bint Abdur Rahman. She is regarded by scholars as one of the trustworthy narrators of ha dith and is said to have acted as Aishah's secretary receiving and replying to letters addressed to her. The example of Aishah in promoting education and in particular the education of Muslim women in the laws and teachings of Islam is one which needs to be followed.

After Khadijah al-Kubra (the Great) and Fatimah az-Zahra (the Resplendent), Aishah as-Siddiqah (the one who affirms the Truth) is regarded as the best woman in Islam. Because of the strength of her personality, she was a leader in every field in knowledg e, in society, in politics and in war. She often regretted her involvement in war but lived long enough to regain position as the most respected woman of her time. She died in the year 58 AH in the month of Ramadan and as she instructed, was buried in the Jannat al-Baqi in the City of Light, beside other companions of the Prophet.

From Alim® Online

Al-Baraa Ibn Malik Al-Ansari

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

His hair looked dishevelled and his whole appearance was unkempt. He was thin and wiry with so little flesh on his bones that it was painful to look at him. Yet in single- handed combat he defeated and killed many opponents and in the thick of battle he was an outstanding fighter against the mushrikeen. He was so courageous and daring that Umar once wrote to his governors throughout the Islamic state that they should not appoint him to lead any army out of fear that he would have them all killed by his daring exploits. This man was al-Baraa ibn Malik al- Ansari, the brother of Anas ibn Malik, the personal aide of the Prophet.

If the tales of Baraa's heroism were to be told in detail, pages and pages could be written. But let one example suffice.

This particular story begins only hours after the death of the noble Prophet when many Arabian tribes took to leaving the religion of God in large numbers, just as they had entered it in large numbers. Within a short space of time only the people of Makkah, Madinah and Taif and scattered communities here and there, whose commitment to Islam was unwavering, remained within the religion.

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, the successor to the Prophet, stood firm against this blind and destructive movement. From the Muhajireen and Ansar, he mobilized eleven armies each under a separate commander and despatched them to various parts of the Arabian peninsula. Their purpose was to make the apostates return to the path of guidance and truth and to confront the leaders of the rebellion.

The strongest group of apostates and the greatest in number were the Banu Hanifah among whom Musaylamah the Imposter arose, claiming that he was a prophet. Musaylamah managed to mobilize forty thousand of the best fighters among his people. Most of these however followed him for the sake of asabEyyah or tribal loyalty and not because they believed in him. One of them in fact said, "I testify that Musaylamah is an imposter and that Muhammad is true but the imposter of Rabi'ah (Musaylamah) is dearer to us than the true man of Mudar (Muhammad). "

Musaylamah routed the first army sent against him under the leadership of Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl. Abu Bakr despatched another army against Musaylamah led by Khalid ibn al-Walid. This army included the cream of the Sahabah from both the Ansar and the Muhajireen. In the front ranks of this army was Baraa ibn Malik and a group of the most valiant Muslims.

The two armies met in the territory of the Banu Hanifah at Yamamah in Najd. Before long, the scale of battle tilted in favour of Musaylamah and his men. The Muslim armies began to retreat from their positions. Musaylamah's forces even stormed the tent of Khalid ibn Walid and drove him from his position. They would have killed his wife if one of them had not granted her protection.

At that point, the Muslims realised in what a perilous situation they were. They were also conscious of the fact that if they were annihilated by Musaylamah, Islam would not be able to stand as a religion and AllahÑthe One God with whom there is no partnerÑwould not be worshipped in the Arabian peninsula after that.

Khalid mustered his forces once more and began reorgamsing them. He separated the Muhajireen and the Ansar and kept men from different tribes apart. Each was put under the leadership of one of its own members so that the losses of each group in the battle might be known.

The battle raged. There was much destruction and death. The Muslims had not experienced anything like this in all the wars they had fought before. Musaylamah's men remained firm amidst the tumult, as firm as immovable mountains although many of them had fallen.

The Muslims displayed tremendous feats of heroism. Thabit ibn Qays, the standard bearer of the Ansar, dug a pit and planted himself in it and fought until he was killed. The pit he dug turned out to be his grave. Zayd ibn alKhattab, brother of Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with them both, called out to the Muslims: "Men, bite with your jaw teeth, strike the enemy and press on. By God, I shall not speak to you after this until either Musaylamah is defeated or I meet God." He then charged against the enemy and continued fighting until he was killed. Salim, the mawla of Abu Hudhaifah, and standard bearer of the Muhajireen displayed unexpected valour. His people feared that he would show weakness or be too terrified to fight. To them he said, "If you manage to overtake me, what a miserable bearer of the Qur'an I shall be." He then valiantly plunged into the enemy ranks and eventually fell as a martyr.

The bravery of all these, however, wanes in front of the heroism of al-Baraa ibn Malik, may God be pleased with him and with them all.

As the battle grew fiercer and fiercer, Khalid turned to al-Baraa and said, "Charge, young man of the Ansar." AlBaraa turned to his men and said, "O Ansar, let not anyone of you think of returning to Madinah. There is no Madinah for you after this day. There is only Allah, then Paradise."

He and the Ansar then launched their attack against the mushrikeen, breaking their ranks and dealing telling blows against them until eventually they began to withdraw. They sought refuge in a garden which later became known in history as The Garden of Death because of the many killed there on that day. The garden was surrounded by high walls. Musaylamah and thousands of his men entered and closed the gates behind them and fortified themselves.

From their new positions they began to rain down arrows on the Muslims.

The valiant Baraa went forward and addressed his company, "Put me on a shield. Raise the shield on spears and hurl me into the garden near the gate. Either I shall die a martyr or I shall open the gate for you."

The thin and wiry al-Baraa was soon sitting on a shield. A number of spears raised the shield and he was thrown into the Garden of Death amongst the multitude of Musaylamah's men. He descended on them like a thunderbolt and continued to fight them in front of the gate. Many fell to his sword and he himself sustained numerous wounds before he could open the gate.

The Muslims charged into the Garden of Death through the gates and over the walls. Fighting was bitter and at close quarters and hundreds were killed. Finally the Muslims came upon Musaylamah and he was killed.

Al Baraa was taken in a litter to Madinah. Khalid ibn alWalid spent a month looking after him and tending his wounds. Eventually his condition improved. Through him the Muslims had gained victory over Musaylamah.

In spite of recovering from his wounds, al-Baraa continued to long for the martyrdom which had eluded him at the Garden of Death. He went on fighting in battle after battle hoping to attain his aim. This came at the battle for Tustar in Persia.

At Tustar the Persians were besieged in one of their defiant fortresses. The siege was long and when its effects became quite unbearable, they adopted a new tactic. From the walls of the fortress, they began to throw down iron chains at the ends of which were fastened iron hooks which were red hot. Muslims were caught by these hooks and were pulled up either dead or in the agony of death.

One of these hooks got hold of Anas ibn Malik, the brother of al-Baraa. As soon as al-Baraa saw this, he leapt up the wall of the fortress and grabbed the chain which bore his brother and began undoing the hook from his body. His hand began to burn but he did not let go before his brother was released.

Baraa himself died during this battle. He had prayed to God to grant him martyrdom.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Amr Ibn Al-Jamuh

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Amr ibn al-Jamuh was one of the leading men in Yathrib in the days of Jahiliyyah. He was the chief of the Banu Salamah and was known to be one of the most generous and valiant persons in the city.

One of the privileges of the city's leaders was having an idol to himself in his house. It was hoped that this idol would bless the leader in whatever he did. He was expected to offer sacrifices to it on special occasions and seek its help at times of distress. The idol of Amr was called Manat. He had made it from the most priceless wood. He spent a great deal of time, money and attention looking after it and he annointed it with the most exquisite perfumes.

Amr was almost sixty years old when the first rays of the light of Islam began to penetrate the houses of Yathrib. House after house was introduced to the new faith at the hands of Mus'ab ibn Umayr, the first missionary sent out to Yathrib before the hijrah. It was through him that Amr's three sonsÑMuawwadh, Muadh and KhalladÑbecame Muslims. One of their contemporaries was the famous Muadh ibn Jabal. Amr's wife, Hind, also accepted Islam with her three sons but Amr himself knew nothing of all this.

Hind saw that the people of Yathrib were being won over to Islam and that not one of the leaders of the city remained in shirk except her husband and a few individuals. She loved her husband dearly and was proud of him but she was concerned that he should die in a state of kufr and end up in hell-fire.

During this time, Amr himself began to feel uneasy. He was afraid that his sons would give up the religion of their forefathers and follow the teaching of Mus'ab ibn Umayr who, within a short space of time, had caused many to turn away from idolatory and enter the religion of Muhammad. To his wife, Amr therefore said:

"Be careful that your children do not come into contact with this man (meaning Mus'ab ibn Umayr) before we pronounce an opinion on him."

"To hear is to obey," she replied. "But would you like to hear from your son Muadh what he relates from this man?"

"Woe to you! Has Muadh turned away from his religion without my knowing?"

The good woman felt pity for the old man and said:

"Not at all. But he has attended some of the meetings of this missionary and memorized some of the things he teaches."

"Tell him to come here," he said. When Muadh came, he ordered:

"Let me hear an example of what this man preaches." Muadh recited the FatEhah (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an):"

"In the name of God, the most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace. All praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, The most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace. Lord of the Day of Judgment! You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help. Guide us on the straight way, the way of those upon whom you have bestowed Your blessings, not of those who have been condemned by You, nor of those who go astray."

"How perfect are these words, and how beautiful!" exclaimed the father. "Is everything he says like this?"

"Yes indeed, father. Do you wish to swear allegiance to him? All your people have already done so" urged Muadh.

The old man remained silent for a while and then said, "I shall not do so until I consult Manat and see what he says."

"What indeed would Manat say, Father? It is only a piece of wood. It can neither think nor speak."

The old man retorted sharply, "I told you, I shall not do anything without him."

Later that day, Amr went before Manat. It was the custom of the idolators then to place an old woman behind the idol when they wished to speak to it. She would reply on behalf of the idol, articulating, so they thought, what the idol had inspired her to say. Amr stood before the idol in great awe and addressed profuse praises to it. Then he said:

"O Manat, no doubt you know that this propagandist who was delegated to come to us from Makkah does not wish evil on anyone but you. He has come only to stop us worshipping you. I do not want to swear allegiance to him in spite of the beautiful words I have heard from him. I have thus come to get your advice. So please advise me."

There was no reply from Manat. Amr continued:

"Perhaps you are angry. But up till now, I have done nothing to harm you . . . Never mind, I shall leave you for a few days to let your anger go away."

Amr's sons knew the extent of their father's dependence on Manat and how with time he had become almost a part of it. They realised however that the idol's place in his heart was being shaken and that they had to help him get rid of Manat. That must be h is path to faith in God.

One night Amr's sons went with their friend Muadh ibn Jabal to Manat, took the idol from its place and threw it in a cess pit belonging to the Banu Salamah. They returned to their homes with no one knowing anything about what they had done. When Amr woke up the following morning, he went in quiet reverence to pay his respects to his idol but did not find it.

"Woe to you all," he shouted. "Who has attacked our god last night?"

There was no reply from anyone. He began to search for the idol, fuming with rage and threatening the perpetrators of the crime. Eventually he found the idol turned upside down on its head in the pit. He washed and perfumed it and returned it to its usual place saying. "If I find out who did this to you, I will humiliate him."

The following night the boys did the same to the idol. The old man recovered it, washed and perfumed it as he had done before and returned it to its place. This happened several times until one night Amr put a sword around the idol's neck and said to it:

"O Manat, I don't know who is doing this to you. If you have any power of good in you, defend yourself against this evil. Here is a sword for you."

The youths waited until Amr was fast asleep. They took the sword from the idol's neck and threw it into the pit. Amr found the idol lying face down in the pit with the sword nowhere in sight. At last he was convinced that the idol had no power at all and did not deserve to be worshipped. It was not long before he entered the religion of Islam.

Amr soon tasted the sweetness of iman or faith in the One True God. At the same time he felt great pain and anguish within himself at the thought of every moment he had spent in shirk. His acceptance of the new religion was total and he placed himself, his wealth and his children in the service of God and His Prophet.

The extent of his devotion was shown during the time of the battle of Uhud. Amr saw his three sons preparing for the battle. He looked at the three determined young men fired by the desire to gain martyrdom, success and the pleasure of God. The scene had a great effect on him and he resolved to go out with them to wage jihad under the banner of the messenger of God. The youths, however, were all against their father carrying out his resolve. He was already quite old and was extremely weak.

"Father," they said, "surely God has excused you. So why do you take this burden on yourself?"

The old man became quite angry and went straight away to the Prophet to complain about his sons:

"O Rasulullah! My sons here want to keep me away from this source of goodness arguing that I am old and decrepit. By God, I long to attain Paradise this way even though I am old and infirm."

"Let him," said the Prophet to his sons. "Perhaps God, the Mighty and the Great, will grant him martyrdom.'

Soon it was time to go out to battle. Amr bade farewell to his wife, turned to the qiblah and prayed:

"O Lord, grant me martyrdom and don't send me back to my family with my hopes dashed."

He set out in the company of his three sons and a large contingent from his tribe, the Banu Salamah.

As the battle raged, Amr could be seen moving in the front ranks, jumping on his good leg (his other leg was partially lame), and shouting,

"I desire Paradise, I desire Paradise."

His son Khallad remained closely behind him and they both fought courageously in defence of the Prophet while many other Muslims deserted in pursuit of booty. Father and son fell on the battlefield and died within moments of each other.

An-Nuayman Ibn Amr

From Alim® Online

In spite of the fact that he fought in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and other major encounters, an-Nuayman remained a light-hearted person who was quick at repartee and who loved to play practical jokes on others.

He belonged to the Banu an-Najjar of Madinah and he was among the early Muslims of the city. He was one of those who pledged allegiance to the Prophet at the Second Pledge of Aqabah. He established links with the Quraysh when he married the sister of Abdu r Rahman ibn Awl and later Umm Kulthum the daughter of Uqbah ibn Mu'ayt. She had obtained a divorce from her husband az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam on account of his harshness and severity.

Unfortunately for a time an-Nuayman became addicted to alcohol. He was caught drinking and the Prophet had him flogged. He was caught a second time and then he had him flogged again. Because he still did not give up the habit, the Prophet ordered that he be flogged with shoes. When all this did not persuade him to stop drinking, the Prophet finally said: "If he goes back (to drinking) then kill him."

This was a severe Pronouncement and Umayr, one of the companions of the Prophet, understood from it that should he return to the drinking of alcohol, an-Nuayman would go outside the pale of Islam and deserve death. Umayr gave vent to his anger and disgus t by saying: "La 'nat Allah alayhi - may God's curse be on him."

The Prophet heard Umayr's imprecation and said: "No, no, don't do (such a thing). Indeed he loves God and His Apostle. The major sin (as this) does not put one outside the community and the mercy of God is close to the believers."

While being firm, the Prophet still held out hope for an-Nuayman's reform especially on account of his past sacrifices as a veteran of Badr. Because he was not someone who went out of his way to conceal his actions, it was easier for him to acknowledge hi s crimes and repent and seek forgiveness from God. This he did and he won the favor of the Prophet and his companions who enjoyed his pleasantries and his infectious laughter.

Once an-Nuayman went to the suq and saw some food being sold which appeared to be tasty and delightful. He ordered some and sent it to the Prophet as if it were a gift from him. The Prophet was delighted with the food and he and his family ate of it. The vendor of the food then came to an-Nuayman to collect the price of it and an-Nuayman said to him: "Go to the Messenger of God it was for him. He and his family ate it."

The vendor went to the Prophet who in turn asked an-Nuayman: "Didn't you give it to me?" "Yes," said an-Nuayman. "I thought you would like it and I wanted you to eat some of it so I had it presented to you. But I don't have any dirhams to pay the vendor f or it. So, pay, O Messenger of God!"

The Prophet had a good laugh and so did his companions. The laugh was at his expense, literally, for he

had to pay the price of the unsolicited gift. An-Nuayman felt that two benefits came out of the incident: the Prophet and his family ate food t hat they enjoyed and the Muslims had a good laugh.

Once Abu Bakr and some companions went on a trading expedition to Busra. Various people on the trip were given fixed duties. Suwaybit ibn Harmalah was made responsible for food and provisions. An-Nuayman was one of the group and on the way he became hun gry and asked Suwaybit for some food. Suwaybit refused and an-Nuayman said to him:

"Do you know what I would yet do with you?" and went on to warn and threaten him but still Suwaybit refused. An-Nuayman then went to a group of Arabs in the suq and said to them: "Would you like to have a strong and sturdy slave whom I can sell to you." T hey said yes and an-Nuayman went on: "He has got a ready tongue and is very articulate. He would resist you and say: 'I am free.' But don't listen

to him"

The men paid the price of the slave - ten qala'is (pieces of gold) and an-Nuayman accepted it and appeared to complete the transaction with business-like efficiency. The buyers accompanied him to fetch theft purchase. Pointing to Suwaybit, he said: "This is the slave whom I sold to you."

The men took hold of Suwaybit and he shouted for dear life and freedom. "I am free. I am Suwaybit ibn Harmalah..."

But they paid no attention to him and dragged him off by the neck as they would have done with any slave.

All the while, an-Nuayman did not laugh or batter an eyelid. He remained completely calm and serious while Suwaybit continued to protest bitterly. Suwaybit's fellow travellers, realizing what was happening, rushed to fetch Abu Bakr, the leader of the car avan, who came running as fast as he could. He explained to the purchasers what had happened and so they released Suwaybit and had their money returned. Abu Bakr then laughed heartily and so did Suwaybit and an-Nuayman. Back in Madinah, when the episode was recounted to the Prophet and his companions, they all laughed even more.

A man once came to the Prophet on a delegation and tethered his camel at the door of the Masjid. The Sahabah noticed that the camel had a large fat hump and their appetite for succulent tasty meat was stimulated. They turned to Nuayman and asked: "Would you deal with this camel?"

An-Nuayman understood what they meant. He got up and slaughtered the camel. The nomad Arab came out and realized what had happened when he saw people grilling, sharing out and eating meat. He shouted in distress: "Waa 'aqraah! Waa Naqataah! (O my camel!)"

The Prophet heard the commotion and came out. He learnt from the Sahabah what had happened and began searching for an-Nuayman but did not find him. Afraid of being blamed and punished, an-Nuayman had fled. The Prophet then followed his footprints. These l ed to a garden belonging to Danbaah the daughter of az-Zubayr, a cousin of the Prophet. He asked the companions where an-Nuayman was. Pointing to a nearby ditch, they said loudly so as not to alert an-Nuayman: "We haven't found him, O Messenger of God ." An-Nuayman was found in the ditch covered with palm branches and leaves and emerged with dirt on his head, beard and face. He stood in the presence of the Prophet who took him by the head and dusted the dirt from his face while he chuckled with laughte r. The companions joined in the mirth. The Prophet paid the price of the camel to its owner and they all joined in the feast.

The Prophet obviously regarded an-Nuayman's pranks for what they were light-hearted sallies that were meant to create some relief and laughter. The religion of Islam does not require people to disdain seemly laughter and levity and remain perpetually gloomy. An appropriate sense of humor is often a saving grace.

An-Nuayman lived on after the Prophet and continued to enjoy the affection of Muslims. But did he put an end to his laughter? During the caliphate of Uthman, a group of Sahabah were sitting in the Masjid. They saw Makhramah ibn Nawfal, an old man who was about one hundred and fifteen years old and obviously rather senile. He was related to the sister of Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl, who was a wife of an-Nuayman.

Makhramah was blind. He was so weak that he could hardly move from his place in the Masjid. He got up to urinate and might have done so in the Masjid. But the companions shouted at him to prevent him from doing so.. An-Nuayman got up and went to take him to another place, as he was instructed. What is this other place that an-Nuayman took him to? In fact he took him only a short distance away from where he was sitting at first and sat him down.

The place was still in the Masjid!

People shouted at Makhramah and made him get up again all in a frenzy. The poor old man was distressed and said: "Who has done this?" "An-Nuayman ibn Amr," he was told.

The old man swore and announced that he would bash an-Nuayman on the head with his stick if he should meet him.

An-Nuayman left and returned. He was up to some prank of his again. He saw Uthman ibn Allan, the Amir al-Muminim, performing Salat in the Masjid. Uthman was never distracted when he stood for Prayer. An-Nuayman also saw Makhramah. He went up to him an d in a changed voice said: "Do you want to get at an-Nuayman?"

The old man remembered what an-Nuayman had done. He remembered his vow and shouted: "Yes, where is he?" An-Nuayman took him by the hand and led him to the place where the Khalifah Uthman stood and said to him: "Here he is!"

The old man raised his staff and bashed the head of

Uthman. Blood flowed and the people shouted: "It's the Amir al-Muminin!"

The dragged Makhramah away and some people set out to get an-Nuayman but Uthman restrained them and asked them to leave him alone. In spite of the blows he had suffered, he was still able to laugh at the deeds of an-Nuayman.

An-Nuayman lived up to the time of Muawiyah when fitnah saddened him and discord filled him with anguish. He lost his levity and laughed no more.

From Alim® Online

An-Numan Ibn Muqarrin

From Alim® Online

The tribe of Muzaynah had their habitations some distance from Yathrib on the caravan route which linked the city to Makkah. News of the Prophet's arrival in Yathrib spread rapidly and soon reached the Muzaynah through members of the tribe who had left a nd returned.

One evening the chieftain of the tribe, an-Numan ibn Maqarrin, sat among the elders and other members of the tribe and addressed them:

"O my people, by God, we have learnt only good about Muhammad, and of His mission we have heard nothing but mercy, kindness and justice. What's wrong with us? Why do we tarry while people are hastening to him?"

"As for myself," he continued, "I have ma de up my mind to leave early in the morning to join him. Whoever of you wishes to go with me, let him get ready."

An-Numan must have been a persuasive chieftain. His words had a wondrous effect on the ears of his people. The following morning an-Numan's ten brothers and four hundred horsemen of the Muzaynah were all ready and prepared to go with him to Yathrib to mee t the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and enter the religion of Islam.

An-Numan however felt embarrassed to go to the Prophet with such a numerous following without carrying any presents for him and the Muslims. There wasn't much he could carry anyway. That year was a year of drought and famine for the Muzaynah and much of t heir livestock and crops had perished. Still, an-Numan went around the dwellings of his fellow tribesmen and gathered up whatever sheep and goats were left. These he drove before him and made his way to Madinah. There in the presence of the Prophet, he an d his fellow tribesmen announced their acceptance of Islam.

The whole of Madinah was agog with excitement with the coming of an-Numan and his companions. Never before had there been a single family with all eleven brothers accepting Islam at the same time together with four hundred horsemen. The noble Prophet was exceedingly glad and rejoiced greatly. Indeed the sincerity of their effort was accepted and commended by God Almighty when He revealed the following words of the Quran to the Prophet:

"And among the nomad Arabs are such as believe in God and the Last Day, and regard all that they spend in God's cause as a means of drawing them nearer to God and of (their being remembered in) the Apostle's prayers. Oh, verily, it shall (indeed) be a me ans of (God's) nearness to them, (for) God will admit them into His grace. Verily God is much-Forgiving, most Merciful."
(The Quran, Surah at-Tawbah, 9:99).

An-Numan lived under the guidance of the Prophet and participated in all the campaigns he waged with valor and dedication. In the time of Abu Bakr, he and the people of Muzaynah played a major and commendable role in putting an end to the fitnah of aposta sy. During the caliphate of Umar al-Faruq,

an-Numan distinguished himself, in particular, in the encounters with the Sasananian Empire.

Shortly before the Battle of Qadisiyyah, the commander of the Muslim forces Sad ibn Abi Waqqas sent a delegation to the Sasanian Emperor, Yazdagird. The delegation was headed by an-Numan ibn Muqarrin and its main purpose was to invite the emperor of Islam . When an-Numan and his delegation reached Ctesiphon, the Sasanian capital, the people of the city looked upon them with curiosity and some disdain. They remarked on their simple appearance, their rough clothes and shoes and their weak-looking horses. Th e Muslims were in no way overwhelmed and sought an audience with Yazdagird. He granted them permission, summoned an interpreter and said to him:

"Say to them (the Muslims): why have you come to our dominions and why do you want to invade us? Perhaps, you have designs on us... and seek to venture against us because we are preoccupied with you. But we

do not wish to inflict punishment on you." An-Numan turned to his men and said:

"If you wish, I shall reply to him on your behalf. But if any one of you wants to speak let him do so first." The Muslims told an-Numan to speak and turning to the Emperor, said: "This man speaks with our tongue so do listen to what he says." An-Numan beg an by praising and glorifying God and invoking peace and blessings on His Prophet. Then he said:

"Indeed God has been Kind and Merciful to us and has sent to us a Messenger to show us the good and command us to follow it; to make us realize what is evil and forbade us from it.

"The Messenger promised us if we were to respond to what he summoned us, God would bestow on us the good of this world and the good of the hereafter.

"Not much time has elapsed but God has given us abundance in place of hardship, honor in place of humiliation and mercy and brotherhood in place of our former enmity.

"The Messenger has commanded us to summon mankind to what is best for them and to begin with those who are our neighbors.

"We therefore invite you to enter into our religion. It is a religion which beautifies and promotes all good and which detests and discourages all that is ugly and reprehensible. It is a religion which leads its adherents from the darkness of tyranny and unbelief to the light and justice of faith."

"Should you respond positively to us and come to Islam, it would be our duty to introduce the Book of God in your midst and help you to live according to it and rule according to its laws. We would then return and leave you to conduct your own affairs.

"Should you refuse, however, to enter the religion of God, we would take the jizyah from you and give you protection in return. If you refuse to give the jizyah, we shall declare war on you."

Yazdagird was angry and furious at what he had heard and said in ridicule: "Certainly I do not know of a nation on earth who is more wretched than you and whose numbers are so few, who are more divided and whose condition is more evil."

"We have been used to delegate your affairs to our provincial governors and they exacted obedience form you on our behalf." Then softening his tone somewhat, he continued, but with greater sarcasm:

"If there is any need which has pushed you to come to us, we would enlist forces to help you make your lands fertile. We would clothe your leaders and the notables of your people and place a king from among ourselves over you who would be gentle to you."

One of an-Numan's delegation responded sharply to this and Yazdagird flew into a rage once more and shouted: "Were it for the fact that ambassadors are not killed, I would kill you all. "Get up. You shall have nothing from me. And tell your commander that I am sending Rustum against him to bury him and you together in the ditch of al Qadisiyyah."

Yazdagird then called for a basketful of earth and ordered that it should be borne outside the city gates by the one whom the Muslims considered to be the most noble among them as a sign of humiliation. Asim the son of Umar accepted the load as a happy au gury and took it to the commander-in-chief, Sad ibn Abi Waqqas, and said to him:

"Accept our congratulations for the victory. The enemy has voluntarily surrendered his territory to us." The Battle of Qadisiyyah ensued and after four days of bitter fighting, the Muslim forces emerged victorious. The victory paved the way for the Musli m advance into the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Persian capital, Ctesiphon, fell and this was followed by a number of engagements as the Persians withdrew northwards.

Despite other defeats and setbacks, Yazdagird refused to yield and constantly organized new levies to attack the Muslims and foment insurrection in the provinces which had come under Muslim control.

Umar had counselled moderation on his generals and ordered them not to press too far eastwards. However he received news of a massive Persian mobilization of about 15O,OOO warriors against the Muslims. He thought of leaving Madinah and facing the massive threat himself. He was advised against this by prominent Muslims in Madinah who suggested instead that he should appoint a military commander to confront the grave situation.

"Show me a man whom I can appoint for this task." said. "You know your army best, O Amir al-Muminin," they replied and after some thought Umar exclaimed:

"By God, I shall appoint as commander-in-chief of the Muslim army a man who, when the two armies meet, will be the most active. He is an-Numan ibn Muqarrin al-Muzani." To him, Umar despatched a letter: "From the servant of God, Umar ibn al-Khattab, to an- Numan ibn Muqarrin:

"I have received news that large numbers of Persians have gathered to fight you in the city of Nihawand. When this my letter reaches you go forward (to confront them) with the help of God, with whoever of the Muslims are with you. Don't take the Muslims o ver too difficult terrain lest they may be hurt, for one Muslim person is dearer to me than a hundred thousand dinars. And Peace be unto you."

An-Numan responded to the orders of the Amir al-Muminin and mobilized the Muslim forces. He despatched an advanced detachment of cavalry to reconnoiter the approaches of the city. Just outside Nihawand, the horses stopped and despite prodding would go no further. The riders dismounted and discovered iron nails in the horses' hooves. They looked around and found that all approaches to the city were strewn with these iron spikes to halt the advance of the Muslim army. On being informed of this, an-Numan ordered the

horsemen to remain where they were and at nightfall to light fires for the enemy to see them. They were also to feign fear and defeat in order to entice the enemy to come out to them and in the process clear the

approaches of the iron spikes. The ruse wor ked. When the Persians saw the van guard of the Muslim army appearing dejected and defeated before them, they sent workers to clear the area of the spikes. These workers were captured by the Muslim cavalry who gained control of the approaches to the city .

An-Numan pitched camp on the outskirts of the city and decided to make a determined assault on the city. He addressed his soldiers:

"I shall say Allahu Akbar three times. At the first time, get Yourselves ready (by performing your toilet and making wu du). At the second time, let every man of you get ready his weapons and gird them on. And the third time, I shall move against the enemies of God and you must join in the attack with me." He went on:

"And if an-Numan is killed, let no one tarry over him. For I shall (now) make a supplication to God Almighty and I want everyone of you to say 'Ameen'. "

He then prayed: "May God grant martyrdom to an-Numan this day and may He grant victory to the Muslims."

Three times an-Numan shouted Allahu Akbar. On the third time, he plunged into the ranks of the enemies and the Muslims rushed on behind him. They were outnumbered six to one but inflicted terrible losses on the Persians.

An-Numan received a mortal blow during the battle. His brother took the standard from his hand, and covered him with a burdah and concealed his death from the others.

The Muslim forces emerged victorious. The Persians never recovered themselves after this battle which Muslim historians have called "the Victory of Victories".

The battle over, the victorious soldiers asked for their valiant commander. His brother lifted the burdab and said: "This is your Amir. God has shown him victory and blessed him with martyrdom."

When the news was brought to Umar in Madinah, a companion who was with him said: "I saw Umar, may God be pleased with him. When he heard of the death of an-Numan ibn Muqarrin, he placed his head in his hands and began to cry."

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List of the Sahaabah's Biographies

At-Tufayl ibn Amr ad-Dawsi

At-Tufayl ibn Amr was the chief of the Daws tribe in preQuranic times and a distinguished Arab notable known for his manly virtues and good works.

He fed the hungry, comforted those in distress and granted asylum to refugees. He was also keenly interested in literature and was himself a sharp and sensitive poet capable of expressing the most delicate emotions.

Tufayl left the hearths of his village in Tihama in the south of the Arabian peninsula and set out for Makkah. The struggle between the noble Prophet and the disbelieving Quraysh was already at its height. Each wanted to gain support for his cause and recruit helpers. The Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, sought help from his Lord. His weapons were faith and truth. The disbelieving Quraysh resisted his message with every weapon, and attempted to keep people away from it by all the means at their disposal.

Tufayl found himself entering this battle without any preparation or warning. He did not come to Makkah to get involved in it. Indeed he was not aware of the struggle that was taking place.

Let Tufayl himself take up the story from this point:

I approached Makkah. As soon as the Quraysh leaders saw me, they came up to me and gave me a most hearty welcome and accommodated me in a grand house. Their leaders and notables then gathered and said:

"O Tufayl, you have come to our town. This man who claims that he is a Prophet has ruined our authority and shattered our community. We are afraid that he would succeed in undermining you and your authority among your people just as he has done with us. Don't speak to the man. On no account listen to anything he has to say. He has the speech of a wizard, causing division between father and son, between brother and brother and between husband and wife."

They went on telling me the most fantastic stories and scared me by recounting tales of his incredible deeds. I made up my mind then not to approach this man, or speak to him or listen to anything he had to say.

The following morning I went to the Sacred Mosque to make tawaf around the Kabah as an act of worship to the idols that we made pilgrimage to and glorified. I inserted a piece of cotton in my ears out of fear that something of the speech of Muhammad would reach my hearing. As soon as I entered the Mosque, I saw him standing near the Kabah. He was praying in a fashion which was different from our prayer. His whole manner of worship was different. The scene captivated me. His worship made me tremble and I felt drawn to him, despite myself, until I was quite close to him.

Not withstanding the precaution I had taken, God willed that some of what he was saying should reach my hearing and I heard a speech that was so beautiful that I said to myself, "What are you doing,

Tufayl? You are a perceptive poet. You can distinguish between the good and the bad in poetry. What prevents you from listening to what this man is saying? If what comes from him is good, accept it, and if it is bad, reject it."

I remained there until the Prophet left for his home. I followed him as he entered his house, and I entered also and said, "O Muhammad, your people have said certain things to me about you. By God, they kept on frightening me away from your message so that I even blocked my ears to keep out your words. Despite this, God caused me to hear something of it and I found it good. So tell me more about your mission."

The Prophet, peace be upon him, did and recited to me Surah Al-Iklaas and Surah Al-Falaq. I swear by God, I had never heard such beautiful words before. Neither was a more noble or just mission ever described to me. Thereupon, I stretched out my hand to him in allegiance and testified that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. This is how I entered Islam.

I stayed on for some time in Makkah learning the teachings of Islam memorizing parts of the Quran. When I decided to return to my people, I said, "O Rasulullah. I am a man who is obeyed in his tribe. I am going back to them and I shall invite them to Islam . . ."

When I returned to my people, my father, who was quite old then, came up to me and I said, 'O Father, let me relate my news to you. I am no longer from you and you are not of me."

"Why so, my son?" he asked.

"I have accepted Islam and now follow the religion of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him," I replied.

"My son," he said, "your religion is my religion."

"Go and wash your sell and cleanse your clothes," I said. "Then come that I may teach you what I have learnt."

This the old man did and I explained Islam to him and he became a Muslim.

"Then came my wife and I said, "Let me relate my news to you. I am no longer of you and you are not of me."

"Good heavens! Why so?" she exclaimed.

"Islam has separated us," I explained. "I have become a Muslim and follow the religion of Muhammad."

"Your religion is my religion," she replied.

'Then go and purify yourself, not with the water of Dhu Shara, the idol of the Daws, but with pure water from the mountain. "

"Good gracious! Do you fear anything from Dhu Shara?"

"Damn Dhu Shari. I told you, go and wash there, far away from people. I guarantee you that this dumb stone won't do a thing to you."

She went and washed and I explained Islam to her and she became a Muslim. I then invited the Daws as a whole to become Muslims. They were all slow in responding, except Abu Hurayrah. He was the quickest to respond to the invitation of Islam.

The next time I went to Makkah, Abu Hurayrah was with me.

"What have you left behind?' the Prophet asked me.

"Hearts with veils over them obscuring the Truth, and firm disbelief. Sin and disobedience have won over the Daws."

The Prophet thereupon stood up, made wudu and prayed with his hands raised to the heavens. Abu Hurayrah remarked, "When I saw the Prophet like this, I was afraid that he was praying against my people and that they would be destroyed."

But the Prophet, upon whom be peace, prayed, "O Lord, guide the Daws, guide the Daws, guide the Daws." Then he turned to me and said:

"Go back to your people, befriend them, treat them gently and invite them to Islam."

I stayed in the land of the Daws inviting them to Islam until after the hijrah of the Prophet to Madinah and after the battle of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq had taken place. Then I went to the Prophet. With me were eighty families who had become Muslims and who were strong in their faith. The Prophet was pleased with us and he gave us a portion of the booty after the battle of Khaybar. We said to him, "O Rasulullah, make us the right wing of your army in every battle and make our efforts acceptable."

Tufayl stayed with the Prophet until the liberation of Makkah. After the destruction of the idols there, Tufayl asked the Prophet to send him to put an end to the worship of Dhu-l Kafayn, the chief idol of his people. The Prophet gave him permission.

Back in Tihama among the Daws, men, women and children of the tribe had gathered and were agitated that the idol was going to be burnt. They were waiting to see if any evil would befall Tufayl should he harm Dhu-l Kafayn. Tufayl approached the idols with the worshipers around it. As he set fire to it, he proclaimed:

"O Dhu-l Kafayn, of your worshipers I certainly am not.

Fire have I inserted into your heart."

Whatever shirk remained in the Daws tribe went up in the flames that burnt the idol. The whole tribe became Muslims.

Tufayl remained a lieutenant of the Prophet until the noble messenger passed away. Tufayl then placed himself in the service of the Khalifah Abu Bakr, the successor of the Prophet. During the Riddah wars, he led a contingent of his people against the impostor Musaylamah.

In the battle of al-Yamamah that followed, the dear companion of the Prophet, Tufayl ibn Amr fought hard but eventually fell as a martyr on the battlefield.

Asmaa Bint Abu Bakr

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Asmaa bint Abu Bakr belonged to a distinguished Muslim family. Her father, Abu Bakr, was a close friend of the Prophet and the first Khalifah after his death. Her half- sister, A'ishah, was a wife of the Prophet and one of the *Ummahat al-Mu 'm ineen*. Her husband, Zubayr ibn al- Awwam, was one of the special personal aides of the Prophet. Her son, Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, became well- known for his incorruptibility and his unswerving devotion to Truth.

Asmaa herself was one of the first persons to accept Islam. Only about seventeen persons including both men and women became Muslims before her. She was later given the nickname Dhat an-Nitaqayn (the One with the Two Waistbands) because of an incident connected with the departure of the Prophet and her father from Makkah on the historic hijrah to Madinah.

Asmaa was one of the few persons who knew of the Prophet's plan to leave for Madinah. The utmost secrecy had to be maintained because of the Quraysh plans to murder the Prophet. On the night of their departure, Asmaa was the one who prepared a bag of food and a water container for their journey. She did not find anything though with which to tie the containers and decided to use her waistband or nitaq. Abu Bakr suggested that she tear it into two. This she did and the Prophet commended her action. From then on she became known as "the One with the Two Waistbands".

When the final emigration from Makkah to Madinah took place soon after the departure of the Prophet, Asmaa was pregnant. She did not let her pregnancy or the prospect of a long and arduous journey deter her from leaving. As soon as she reached Quba on the outskirts of Madinah, she gave birth to a son, Abdullah. The Muslims shouted AllaXu Akbar (God is the Greatest) and Laa ilaaha illa Allah (There is no God but Allah) in happiness and thanksgiving because this was the first child to be born to the muhajireen in Madinah.

Asmaa became known for her fine and noble qualities and for the keenness of her intelligence. She was an extremely generous person. Her son Abdullah once said of her, "I have not seen two women more generous than my aunt A'ishah and my mother Asmaa. But their generosity was expressed in different ways. My aunt would accumulate one thing after another until she had gathered what she felt was sufficient and then distributed it all to those in need. My mother, on the other hand, would not keep anything even for the morrow."

Asmaa's presence of mind in difficult circumstances was remarkable. When her father left Makkah, he took all his wealth, amounting to some six thousand dirhams, with him and did not leave any for his family. When Abu Bakr's father, Abu Quhafah (he was still a mushrik) heard of his departure he went to his house and said to Asmaa:

"I understand that he has left you bereft of money after he himself has abandoned you."

"No, grandfather," replied Asmaa, "in fact he has left us much money." She took some pebbles and put them in a small recess in the wall where they used to put money. She threw a cloth over the heap and took the hand of her grandfather --he was blind--and said, "See how much money he has left us".

Through this strategem, Asmaa wanted to allay the fears of the old man and to forestall him from giving them anything of his own wealth. This was because she disliked receiving any assistance from a mushrik even if it was her own grandfather.

She had a similar attitude to her mother and was not inclined to compromise her honour and her faith. Her mother, Qutaylah, once came to visit her in Madinah. She was not a Muslim and was divorced from her father in preIslamic times. Her mother brought her gifts of raisins, clarified butter and qaraz (pods of a species of sant tree). Asmaa at first refused to admit her into her house or accept the gifts. She sent someone to A'ishah to ask the Prophet, peace be upon him, about her attitude to her mother and he replied that she should certainly admit her to her house and accept the gifts. On this occasion, the following revelation came to the Prophet:

"God forbids you not, with regard to those who do not fight you because of your faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them. God loves those who are just. God only forbids you with regard to those who fight you for your Faith, and drive you from your homes, and support others in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances) that do wrong."
(Surah al-Mumtahanah 60: 8-9).

For Asmaa and indeed for many other Muslims, life in Madinah was rather difficult at first. Her husband was quite poor and his only major possession to begin with was a horse he had bought. Asmaa herself described these early days:

"I used to provide fodder for the horse, give it water and groom it. I would grind grain and make dough but I could not bake well. The women of the Ansar used to bake for me. They were truly good women. I used to carry the grain on my head from az-Zubayr's plot which the Prophet had allocated to him to cultivate. It was about three *farsakh* (about eight kilometres) from the town's centre. One day I was on the road carrying the grain on my head when I met the Prophet and a group of Sahabah. He called out to me and stopped his camel so that I could ride behind him. I felt embarrassed to travel with the Prophet and also remembered az-Zubayr's jealousy--he was the most jealous of men. The Prophet realised that I was embarrassed and rode on."

Later, Asmaa related to az-Zubayr exactly what had happened and he said, "By God, that you should have to carry grain is far more distressing to me than your riding with (the Prophet)".

Asmaa obviously then was a person of great sensitivity and devotion. She and her husband worked extremely hard together until their situation of poverty gradually changed. At times, however, az-Zubayr treated her harshly. Once she went to her father and complained to him about this. His reply to her was: "My daughter, have sabr for if a woman has a righteous husband and he dies and she does not marry after him, they will be brought together again in Paradise."

Az-Zubayr eventually became one of the richest men among the Sahabah but Asmaa did not allow this to corrupt her principles. Her son, al-Mundhir once sent her an elegant dress from Iraq made of fine and costly material. Asmaa by this time was blind. She felt the material and said, "It's awful. Take it back to him".

Al-Mundhir was upset and said, "Mother, it was not transparent."

"It may not be transparent," she retorted, "but it is too tight-fitting and shows the contours of the body."

Al-Mundhir bought another dress that met with her approval and she accepted it.

If the above incidents and aspects of Asmaa's life may easily be forgotten, then her final meeting with her son, Abdullah, must remain one of the most unforgettable moments in early Muslim history. At that meeting she demonstrated the keenness of her intelligence, her resoluteness and the strength of her faith.

Abdullah was in the running for the Caliphate after the death of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. The Hijaz, Egypt, Iraq, Khurasan and much of Syria were favourable to him and acknowledged him as the Caliph. The Ummayyads however continued to contest the Caliphate and to field a massive army under the command of Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi. Relentless battles were fought between the two sides during which Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr displayed great acts of courage and heroism. Many of his supporters however could not withstand the continuous strain of battle and gradually began to desert him. Finally he sought refuge in the Sacred Mosque at Makkah. It was then that he went to his mother, now an old blind woman, and said:

"Peace be on you, Mother, and the mercy and blessings of God."

"Unto you be peace, Abdullah," she replied. "What is it that brings you here at this hour while boulders from Hajjaj's catapults are raining down on your soldiers in the Haram and shaking the houses of Makkah?" "I came to seek your advice," he said.

"To seek my advice?" she asked in astonishment. "About what?"

"The people have deserted me out of fear of Hajjaj or being tempted by what he has to offer. Even my children and my family have left me. There is only a small group of men with me now and however strong and steadfast they are they can only resist for an hour or two more. Messengers of the Banu Umayyah (the Umayyads) are now negotiating with me, offering to give me whatever wordly possessions I want, should I lay down my arms and swear allegiance to Abdul Malik ibn Marwan. What do you think?"

Raising her voice, she replied:

"It's your affair, Abdullah, and you know yourself better. If however you think that you are right and that you are standing up for the Truth, then persevere and fight on as your companions who were killed under your flag had shown perseverance. If however you desire the world, what a miserable wretch you are. You would have destroyed yourself and you would have destroyed your men."

"But I will be killed today, there is no doubt about it."

"That is better for you than that you should surrender yourself to Hajjaj voluntarily and that some minions of Banu Umayyah should play with your head."

"I do not fear death. I am only afraid that they will mutilate me."

"There is nothing after death that man should be afraid of. Skinning does not cause any pain to the slaughtered sheep."

Abdullah's face beamed as he said:

"What a blessed mother! Blessed be your noble qualities! I have come to you at this hour to hear what I

have heard. God knows that I have not weakened or despaired. He is witness over me that I have not stood up for what I have out of love for this world and its attractions but only out of anger for the sake of God. His limits have been transgressed. Here am I, going to what is pleasing to you. So if I am killed, do not grieve for me and commend me to God."

"I shall grieve for you," said the ageing but resolute Asmaa, "only if you are killed in a vain and unjust cause."

"Be assured that your son has not supported an unjust cause, nor committed any detestable deed, nor done any injustice to a Muslim or a Dhimmi and that there is nothing better in his sight than the pleasure of God, the Mighty, the Great. I do not say this to exonerate myself. God knows that I have only said it to make your heart firm and steadfast. "

"Praise be to God who has made you act according to what He likes and according fo what I like. Come close to me, my son, that I may smell and feel your body for this might be the last meeting with you."

Abdullah knelt before her. She hugged him and smothered his head, his face and his neck with kisses. Her hands began to squeeze his body when suddenly she withdrew them and asked:

"What is this you are wearing, Abdullah?"

"This is my armour plate."

"This, my son, ls not the dress of one who desires martyrdom. Take it off. That will make your movements lighter and quicker. Wear instead the sirwal (a long under garment) so that if you are killed your 'awrah will not be exposed.

Abdullah took off his armour plate and put on the sirwal. As he left for the Haram to join the fighting he said:

"My mother, don't deprive me of your dada (prayer)."

Raising her hands to heaven, she prayed:

"O Lord, have mercy on his staying up for long hours and his loud crying in the darkness of the night while people slept . . .

"O Lord, have mercy on his hunger and his thirst on his journeys from Madinah and Makkah while he fasted . . .

"O Lord, bless his righteousness to his mother and his father . . .

"O Lord, I commend him to Your cause and I am pleased with whatever You decree for him. And grant me for his sake the reward of those who are patient and who persevere."

By sunset, Abdullah was dead. Just over ten days later, his mother joined him. She was a hundred years old. Age had not made her infirm nor blunted the keenness of her mind.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Barakah

We do not know precisely how the young Abyssinian girl ended up for sale in Makkah. We do not know her 'roots', who her mother was, or her father or her ancestors. There were many like her, boys and girls, Arabs and non-Arabs, who were captured and brought to the slave market of the city to be sold.

A terrible fate awaited some who ended up in the hands of cruel masters or mistresses who exploited their labor to the full and treated them with the utmost harsh ness.

A few in that inhuman environment were rather more fortunate. They were taken into the homes of more gentle and caring people.

Barakah, the young Abyssinian girl, was one of the more fortunate ones. She was saved by the generous and kind Abdullah, the son of Abd al-Muttalib. 'She became the only servant in his household and when he was married, to the lady Aminah, she looked after her affairs as well.

Two weeks after the couple were married, according to Barakah, Abdullah's father came to their house and instructed his son to go with a trading caravan that was leaving for Syria. Aminah was deeply distressed and cried:

"How strange! How strange! How can my husband go on a trading journey to Syria while I am yet a bride and the traces of henna are still on my hands."

Abdullah's departure was heartbreaking. In her anguish, Aminah fainted. Soon after he left, Barakah said: "When I saw Aminah unconscious, I shouted in distress and pain: 'O my lady!' Aminah opened her eyes and looked at me with tears streaming down her face. Suppressing a groan she said: "Take me to bed, Barakah."

"Aminah stayed bedridden for a long time. She spoke to no one. Neither did she look at anyone who visited her except Abd al-Muttalib, that noble and gentle old man. "Two months after the departure of Abdullah, Aminah called me at dawn one morning and, her face beaming with joy, she said to me:

"O Barakah! I have seen a strange dream." "Something good, my lady," I said.

"I saw lights coming from my abdomen lighting up the

mountains, the hills and the valleys around Makkah." "Do you feel pregnant, my lady?"

"Yes, Barakah," she replied. "But I do not feel any discomfort as other women feel." "You shall give birth to a blessed child who will bring goodness," I said.

So long as Abdullah was away, Aminah remained sad and melancholic. Barakah stayed at her side trying to comfort her and make her cheerful by talking to her and relating stories. Aminah however became even more distressed when Abd al-Muttalib came and told her she had to leave her home and go to the mountains as other Makkans had done because of an impending attack on the city by the ruler of

Yemen, someone called Abrahah. Aminah told him that she was too grief-striken and weak to leave for the mountains but insisted that Abrahah could never enter Makkah and destroy the Kabah because it was protected by the Lord. Abd al-Muttalib became very agitated but there was no sign of fear on Aminah's face. Her confidence that the Kabah would not be harmed was well-founded. Abrahah's army with an elephant in the vanguard was destroyed before it could enter Makkah.

Day and night, Barakah stayed beside Aminah. She said: "I slept at the foot of her bed and heard her groans at night as she called for her absent husband. Her moans would awaken me and I would try to comfort her and give her courage."

The first part of the caravan from Syria returned and was joyously welcomed by the trading families of Makkah. Barakah went secretly to the house of Abd al-Muttalib to find out about Abdullah but had no news of him. She went back to Aminah but did not tell her what she had seen or heard in order not to distress her. The entire caravan eventually returned but not with Abdullah.

Later, Barakah was at Abd al-Muttalib's house when news came from Yathrib that Abdullah had died. She said: "I screamed when I heard the news. I don't know what I did after that except that I ran to Aminah's house shouting, lamenting for the absent one who would never return, lamenting for the beloved one for whom we waited so long, lamenting for the most beautiful youth of Makkah, for Abdullah, the pride of the Quraysh.

"When Aminah heard the painful news, she fainted and I stayed by her bedside while she was in a state between life and death. There was no one else but me in Aminah's house. I nursed her and looked after her during the day and through the long nights until she gave birth to her child, "Muhammad", on a night in which the heavens were resplendent with the light of God."

When Muhammad was born, Barakah was the first to hold him in her arms. His grandfather came and took him to the Kabah and with all Makkah, celebrated his birth. Barakah stayed with Aminah while Muhammad was sent to the badiyah with the lady Halimah who looked after him in the bracing atmosphere of the open desert. At the end of five years, he was brought back to Makkah and Aminah received him with tenderness and love and Barakah welcomed him "with joy, longing and admiration".

When Muhammad was six years old, his mother decided to visit the grave of her husband, Abdullah, in Yathrib. Both Barakah and Abd al-Muttalib tried to dissuade her. Aminah however was determined. So one morning they set off- Aminah, Muhammad and Barakah huddled together in a small hawdaj mounted on a large camel, part of a huge caravan that was going to Syria. In order to shield the tender child from any pain and worry, Aminah did not tell Muhammad that she was going to visit the grave of his father.

The caravan went at a brisk pace. Barakah tried to console Aminah for her son's sake and much of the time the boy Muhammad slept with his arms around Barakah's neck.

The caravan took ten days to reach Yathrib. The boy Muhammad was left with his maternal uncles of the Banu Najjar while Aminah went to visit the grave of Abdullah. Each day for a few weeks she stayed at the grave. She was consumed by grief.

On the way back to Makkah, Aminah became seriously ill with fever. Halfway between Yathrib and Makkah, at a place called al-Abwa, they stopped. Aminah's health deteriorated rapidly. One pitch dark night, she was running a high temperature. The fever had got to her head and she called out to Barakah in a choking voice.

Barakah related: "She whispered in my ear: 'O Barakah, I shall depart from this world shortly. I commend my son Muhammad to your care. He lost his father while he was in my abdomen. Here he is now, losing his mother under his very eyes. Be a mother to him, Barakah. And don't ever leave him.'

"My heart was shattered and I began to sob and wail. The child was distressed by my wailing and began to weep. He threw himself into his mother's arms and held tightly onto her neck. She gave one last moan and then was forever silent."

Barakah wept. She wept bitterly. With her own hands she dug a grave in the sand and buried Aminah, moistening the grave with whatever tears were left in her heart. Barakah returned with the orphan child to Makkah and placed him in the care of his grandfather. She stayed at his house to look after him. When Abd al-Muttalib died two years later, she went with the child to the house of his uncle Abu Talib and continued to look after his needs until he was grown up and married the lady Khadijah.

Barakah then stayed with Muhammad and Khadijah in a house belonging to Khadijah. "I never left him and he never left me," she said. One day Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, called out to her and said: "Ya Ummah!" (He always called her "Mother".) "Now I am a married man, and you are still unmarried. What do you think if someone should come now and ask to marry you?" Barakah looked at Muhammad and said: "I shall never leave you. Does a mother abandon her son?" Muhammad smiled and kissed her head. He looked at his wife Khadijah and said to her: "This is Barakah. This is my mother after my own mother. She is the rest of my family."

Barakah looked at the lady Khadijah who said to her: "Barakah, you have sacrificed your youth for the sake of Muhammad. Now he wants to pay back some of his obligations to you. For my sake and his, agree to be married before old age overtakes you."

"Whom shall I marry, my lady?" asked Barakah. "There is here now Ubayd ibn Zayd from the Khazraj tribe of Yathrib. He has come to us seeking your hand in marriage. For my sake, don't refuse."

Barakah agreed. She married Ubayd ibn Zayd and went with him to Yathrib. There she gave birth to a son whom she called Ayman and from that time onwards people called her "Umm Ayman" the mother of Ayman.

Her marriage however did not last very long. Her husband died and she returned once more to Makkah to live with her "son" Muhammad in the house of the lady Khadijah. Living in the same household at the time were Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hind (Khadijah's daughter by her first husband), and Zayd ibn Harithah.

Zayd was an Arab from the tribe of Kalb who was captured as a boy and brought to Makkah to be sold in the slave market. He was bought by Khadijah's nephew and put in her service. In Khadijah's household, Zayd became attached to Muhammad and devoted himself to his service. Their relationship was like that of a son to a father. Indeed when Zayd's father came to Makkah in search of him, Zayd was given the choice by Muhammad of either going with his father or staying with him. Zayd's reply to his father was:

"I shall never leave this man. He has treated me nobly, as a father would treat his son. Not a single day have I felt that I am a slave. He has looked after me well. He is kind and loving towards me and strives for my enjoyment and happiness. He is the most noble of men and the greatest person in creation. How can I leave him and go with you?...I shall never leave him."

Later, in public Muhammad proclaimed the freedom of Zayd. However, Zayd continued to live with him

as part of his household and devoted himself to his service.

When Muhammad was blessed with prophethood, Barakah and Zayd were among the first to believe in the message he proclaimed. They bore with the early Muslims the persecution which the Quraysh meted out to them.

Barakah and Zayd performed invaluable services to the mission of the Prophet. They acted as part of an intelligence service exposing themselves to the persecution and punishment of the Quraysh and risking their lives to gain information on the plans and conspiracies of the mushrikin.

One night the mushrikun blocked off the roads leading to the House of al-Arqam where the Prophet gathered his companions regularly to instruct them in the teachings of Islam. Barakah had some urgent information from Khadijah which had to be conveyed to the Prophet. She risked her life trying to reach the House of al-Arqam. When she arrived and conveyed the message to the Prophet, he smiled and said to her:

"You are blessed, Umm Ayman. Surely you have a place in Paradise." When Umm Ayman left, the Prophet looked at his companions and asked: "Should one of you desire to marry a woman from the people of Paradise, let him marry Umm Ayman."

Ali the companions remained silent and did not utter a word. Umm Ayman was neither beautiful nor attractive. She was by now about fifty years old and looked rather frail. Zayd ibn al-Harithah however came forward and said:

"Messenger of Allah, I shall marry Umm Ayman. By Allah, she is better than women who have grace and beauty."

Zayd and Umm Ayman were married and were blessed with a son whom they named Usamah. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, loved Usamah as his own son. Often he played with him, kissed him and fed him with his own hands. The Muslims would say: "He is the beloved son of the beloved." From an early age Usamah distinguished himself in the service of lslam, and was later given weighty responsibilities by the Prophet.

When the Prophet migrated to Yathrib, henceforth to be known as al-Madinah, he left Umm Ayman behind in Makkah to look after certain special affairs in his household. Eventually she migrated to Madinah on her own. She made the long and difficult journey through the desert and mountainous terrain on foot. The heat was killing and sandstorms obscured the way but she persisted, borne along by her deep love and attachment for Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace. When she reached Madinah, her feet were sore and swollen and her face was covered with sand and dust.

"Ya Umm Ayman! Ya Ummi! (O Umm Ayman! O my mother!) Indeed for you is a place in Paradise!" exclaimed the Prophet when he saw her. He wiped her face and eyes, massaged her feet and rubbed her shoulders with his kind and gentle hands.

At Madinah, Umm Ayman played her full part in the affairs of the Muslims. At Uhud she distributed water to the thirsty and tended the wounded. She accompanied the Prophet on some expeditions, to Khaybar and Hunayn for example.

Her son Ayman, a devoted companion of the Prophet was martyred at Hunayn in the eighth year after the Hijrah. Barakah's husband, Zayd, was killed at the Battle of Mutah in Syria after a lifetime of

distinguished service to the Prophet and Islam. Barakah at this time was about seventy years old and spent much of her time at home. The Prophet, accompanied by Abu Bakr and Umar often visited her and asked: "Ya Ummi! Are you well?" and she would reply: "I am well, O Messenger of Allah so long as Islam is."

After the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had died, Barakah would often be found with tears in her eyes. She was once asked, "Why are you crying?" and she replied: "By Allah, I knew that the Messenger of Allah would die but I cry now because the revelation from on high has come to an end for us."

Barakah was unique in that she was the only one who was so close to the Prophet throughout his life from birth till death. Her life was one of selfless service in the Prophet's household. She remained deeply devoted to the person of the noble, gentle and caring Prophet. Above all, her devotion to the religion of Islam was strong and unshakable. She died during the caliphate of Uthman. Her roots were unknown but her place in Paradise was assured.

Fatimah Bint Muhammad

From Alim® Online

Fatimah was the fifth child of Muhammad and Khadijah. She was born at a time when her noble father had begun to spend long periods in the solitude of mountains around Makkah, meditating and reflecting on the great mysteries of creation.

This was the time, before the Bithah, when her eldest sister Zaynab was married to her cousin, al-Aas ibn ar Rabiah. Then followed the marriage of her two other sisters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, to the sons of Abu Lahab, a paternal uncle of the Prophet. Both Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamil turned out to be flaming enemies of the Prophet from the very beginning of his public mission.

The little Fatimah thus saw her sisters leave home one after the other to live with their husbands. She was too young to understand the meaning of marriage and the reasons why her sisters had to leave home. She loved them dearly and was sad and lonely whe n they left. It is said that a certain silence and painful sadness came over her then.

Of course, even after the marriage of her sisters, she was not alone in the house of her parents. Barakah, the maid-servant of Aminah, the Prophet's mother, who had been with the Prophet since his birth, Zayd ibn Harithah, and Ali, the young son of Abu Ta lib were all part of Muhammad's household at this time. And of course there was her loving mother, the lady Khadijah.

In her mother and in Barakah, Fatimah found a great deal of solace and comfort. in Ali, who was about two years older than she, she found a "brother" and a friend who somehow took the place of her own brother al-Qasim who had died in his infancy. Her othe r brother Abdullah, known as the Good and the Pure, who was born after her, also died in his infancy. However in none of the people in her father's household did Fatimah find the carefree joy and happiness which she enjoyed with her sisters. She was an unusually sensitive child for her age.

When she was five, she heard that her father had become Rasul Allah, the Messenger of God. His first task was to convey the good news of Islam to his family and close relations. They were to worship God Almighty alone. Her mother, who was a tower of str ength and support, explained to Fatimah what her father had to do. From this time on, she became more closely attached to him and felt a deep and abiding love for him. Often she would be at Iris side walking through the narrow streets and alleys of Makkah , visiting the Kabah or attending secret gatherings off, the early Muslims who had accepted Islam and pledged allegiance to the Prophet.

One day, when she was not yet ten, she accompanied her father to the Masjid al-Haram. He stood in the place known as al-Hijr facing the Kabah and began to pray. Fatimah stood at his side. A group of Quraysh, by no means well-disposed to the Prophet, gathe red about him. They included Abu Jahl ibn Hisham, the Prophet's uncle, Uqbah ibn Abi Muayt, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and Shaybah and Utbah, sons of Rabi'ah. Menacingly, the group went up to the Prophet and Abu Jahl, the ringleader, asked:

"Which of you can bring the entrails of a slaughtered animal and throw it on Muhammad?"

Uqbah ibn Abi Muayt, one of the vilest of the lot, volunteered and hurried off. He returned with the obnoxious filth and threw it on the shoulders of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, while he was still prostrating. Abdullah ibn Masud, a companion of the Prophet, was present but he was powerless to do or say anything.

Imagine the feelings of Fatimah as she saw her father being treated in this fashion. What could she, a girl not ten years old, do? She went up to her father and removed the offensive matter and then stood firmly and angrily before the group of Quraysh thu gs and lashed out against them. Not a single word did they say to her. The noble Prophet raised his head on completion of the prostration and went on to complete the Salat. He then said: "O Lord, may you punish the Quraysh!" and repeated this imprecati on three times. Then he continued:

"May You punish Utbah, Uqbah, Abu Jahl and Shaybah." (These whom he named were all killed many years later at the Battle of Badr)

On another occasion, Fatimah was with the Prophet as he made; tawaf around the Kabah. A Quraysh mob gathered around him. They seized him and tried to strangle him with his own clothes. Fatimah screamed and shouted for help. Abu Bakr rushed to the scene a nd managed to free the Prophet. While he was doing so, he pleaded:

"Would you kill a man who says, 'My Lord is God?'" Far from giving up, the mob turned on Abu Bakr and began beating him until blood flowed from his head and face.

Such scenes of vicious opposition and harassment against her father and the early Muslims were witnessed by the young Fatimah. She did not meekly stand aside but joined in the struggle in defence of her father and his noble mission. She was still a young girl and instead of the cheerful romping, the gaiety and liveliness which children of her age are and should normally be accustomed to, Fatimah had to witness and participate in such ordeals.

Of course, she was not alone in this. The whole of the Prophet's family suffered from the violent and mindless Quraysh. Her sisters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum also suffered. They were living at this time in the very nest of hatred and intrigue against the Prophet. Their husbands were Utbah and Utaybah, sons of Abu Lahab and Umm Jamil. Umm Jamil was known to be a hard and harsh woman who had a sharp and evil tongue. It was mainly because of her that Khadijah was not pleased with the marriages of her daught ers to Umm Jamil's sons in the first place. It must have been painful for Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum to be living in the household of such inveterate enemies who not only joined but led the campaign against theft father.

As a mark of disgrace to Muhammad and his family, Utbah and Utaybah were prevailed upon by their parents to divorce their wives. This was part of the process of ostracizing the Prophet totally. The Prophet in fact welcomed his daughters back to his home w ith joy, happiness and relief.

Fatimah, no doubt, must have been happy to be with her sisters once again. They all wished that their eldest sister, Zaynab, would also be divorced by her husband. In fact, the Quraysh brought pressure on Abu-l Aas to do so but he refused. When the Qurays h leaders came up to him and promised him the richest and most beautiful woman as a wife should he divorce Zaynab, he replied:

"I love my wife deeply and passionately and I have a great and high esteem for her father even though I have not entered the religion of Islam."

Both Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were happy to be back with their loving parents and to be rid of the unbearable mental torture to which they had been subjected in the house of Umm Jamil. Shortly afterwards, Ruqayyah married again, to the young and shy Uthma n ibn Allan who was among the first to have accepted Islam. They both left for Abyssinia among the first muhajirin who sought refuge in that land and stayed there for several years. Fatimah was not to see Ruqayyah again until after their mother had died.< P> The persecution of the Prophet, his family and his followers continued and even became worse after the migration of the first Muslims to Abyssinia. In about the seventh year of his mission, the Prophet and his family were forced to leave their homes and s eek refuge in a rugged little valley enclosed by hills on all sides and defile, which could only be entered from Makkah by a narrow path.

To this arid valley, Muhammad and the clans of Banu Hashim and al-Muttalib were forced to retire with limited supplies of food. Fatimah was one of the youngest members of the clans -just about twelve years old - and had to undergo months of hardship and suffering. The wailing of hungry children and women in the valley could be heard from Makkah. The Quraysh allowed no food and contact with the Muslims whose hardship was only relieved somewhat during the season of pilgrimage. The boycott lasted for three years. When it was lifted, the Prophet had to face even more trials and difficulties. Khadijah, the faithful and loving, died shortly afterwards. With her death, the Prophet and his family lost one of the greatest sources of comfort and strength which h ad sustained them through the difficult period. The year in which the noble Khadijah, and later Abu Talib, died is known as the Year of Sadness. Fatimah, now a young lady, was greatly distressed by her mother's death. She wept bitterly and for some time was so grief-striken that her health deteriorated. It was even feared she might die of grief.

Although her older sister, Umm Kulthum, stayed in the same household, Fatimah realized that she now had a greater responsibility with the passing away of her mother. She felt that she had to give even greater support to her father. With loving tendernes s, she devoted herself to looking after his needs. So concerned was she for his welfare that she came to be called "Umm Abi-ha the mother of her father". She also provided him with solace and comfort during times of trial, difficulty and crisis.

Often the trials were too much for her. Once, about this time, an insolent mob heaped dust and earth upon his gracious head. As he entered his home, Fatimah wept profusely as she wiped the dust from her father's head.

"Do not cry, my daughter," he said, "for God shall protect your father."

The Prophet had a special love for Fatimah. He once said: "Whoever pleased Fatimah has indeed pleased God and whoever has caused her to be angry has indeed angered God. Fatimah is a part of me. Whatever pleases her pleases me and whatever angers her a ngers me."

He also said: "The best women in all the world are four: the Virgin Mary, Aasiyaa the wife of Pharoah, Khadijah Mother of the Believers, and Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad." Fatimah thus acquired a place of love and esteem in the Prophet's heart that was o nly occupied by his wife Khadijah.

Fatimah, may God be pleased with her, was given the title of "az-Zahraa" which means "the Resplendent One". That was because of her beaming face which seemed to radiate light. It is said that when she stood for Prayer, the mihrab would reflect the light of her countenance. She was also called "al-Batul" because of her asceticism. Instead of spending her time in the company of women, much of her time would be spent in Salat, in reading the Quran and in other acts of ibadah.

Fatimah had a strong resemblance to her father, the Messenger of God. Aishah. the wife of the Prophet, said of her: "I have not seen any one of God's creation resemble the Messenger of God more in speech,

conversation and manner of sitting than Fatimah, may God be pleased with her. When the Prophet saw her approaching, he would welcome her, stand up and kiss her, take her by the hand and sit her down in the place where he was sitting." She would do the same when the Prophet came to her. She would sta nd up and welcome him with joy and kiss him.

Fatimah's fine manners and gentle speech were part of her lovely and endearing personality. She was especially kind to poor and indigent folk and would often give all the food she had to those in need even if she herself remained hungry. She had no cravin g for the ornaments of this world nor the luxury and comforts of life. She lived simply, although on occasion as we shall see circumstances seemed to be too much and too difficult for her.

She inherited from her father a persuasive eloquence that was rooted in wisdom. When she spoke, people would often be moved to tears. She had the ability and the sincerity to stir the emotions, move people to tears and fill their hearts with praise and g ratitude to God for His grace and His inestimable bounties.

Fatimah migrated to Madinah a few weeks after the Prophet did. She went with Zayd ibn Harithah who was sent by the Prophet back to Makkah to bring the rest of his family. The party included Fatimah and Umm Kulthum, Sawdah, the Prophet's wife, Zayd's wife Barakah and her son Usamah. Travelling with the group also were Abdullah the son of Abu Bakr who accompanied his mother and his sisters, Aishah and Asma.

In Madinah, Fatimah lived with her father in the simple dwelling he had built adjoining the mosque. In the second year after the Hijrah, she received proposals of marriage through her father, two of which were turned down. Then Ali, the son of Abu Talib, plucked up courage and went to the Prophet to ask for her hand in marriage. In the presence of the Prophet, however, Ali became over-awed and tongue-tied. He stared at the ground and could not say anything. The Prophet then asked: "Why have you come? Do you need something?" Ali still could not speak and then the Prophet suggested: "Perhaps you have come to propose marriage to Fatimah."

"Yes," replied Ali. At this, according to one report, the Prophet said simply: "Marhaban wa ahlan - Welcome into the family," and this was taken by Ali and a group of Ansar who were waiting outside for him as indicating the Prophet's approval. Another re port indicated that the Prophet approved and went on to ask Ali if he had anything to give as mahr. Ali replied that he didn't. The Prophet reminded him that he had a shield which could be sold.

Ali sold the shield to Uthman for four hundred dirhams and as he was hurrying back to the Prophet to hand over the sum as mahr, Uthman stopped him and said:

"I am returning your shield to you as a present from me on your marriage to Fatimah." Fatimah and Ali were thus married most probably at the beginning of the second year after the Hijrah. She was about nineteen years old at the time and Ali was about twen ty one. The Prophet himself performed the marriage ceremony. At the walimah. the guests were served with dates, figs and hais (a mixture of dates and butter fat). A leading member of the Ansar donated a ram and others made offerings of grain. All Madin ah rejoiced.

On her marriage. the Prophet is said to have presented Fatimah and Ali with a wooden bed intertwined with palm leaves, a velvet coverlet. a leather cushion filled with palm fibre, a sheepskin, a pot, a waterskin and a quern for grinding grain.

Fatimah left the home of her beloved father for the first time to begin life with her husband. The Prophet was clearly anxious on her account and sent Barakah with her should she be in need of any help. And no doubt Barakah was a source of comfort and sol ace to her. The Prophet prayed for them:

"O Lord, bless them both, bless their house and bless their offspring." In Ali's humble dwelling, there was only a sheepskin for a bed. In the morning after the wedding night, the Prophet went to Ali's house and knocked on the door.

Barakah came out and the Prophet said to her: "O Umm Ayman, call my brother for me."

"Your brother? That's the one who married your daughter?" asked Barakah somewhat incredulously as if to say: Why should the Prophet call Ali his "brother"? (He referred to Ali as his brother because just as pairs of Muslims were joined in brotherhood aft er the Hijrah, so the Prophet and Ali were linked as "brothers".)

The Prophet repeated what he had said in a louder voice. Ali came and the Prophet made a du'a, invoking the blessings of God on him. Then he asked for Fatimah. She came almost cringing with a mixture of awe and shyness and the Prophet said to her:

"I have married you to the dearest of my family to me." In this way, he sought to reassure her. She was not starting life with a complete stranger but with one who had grown up in the same household, who was among the first to become a Muslim at a tender age, who was known for his courage, bravery and virtue, and whom the Prophet described as his "brother in this world and the hereafter".

Fatimah's life with Ali was as simple and frugal as it was in her father's household. In fact, so far as material comforts were concerned, it was a life of hardship and deprivation. Throughout their life together, Ali remained poor because he did not set great store by material wealth. Fatimah was the only one of her sisters who was not married to a wealthy man.

In fact, it could be said that Fatimah's life with Ali was even more rigorous than life in her father's home. At least before marriage, there were always a number of ready helping hands in the Prophet's household. But now she had to cope virtually on her own. To relieve theft extreme poverty, Ali worked as a drawer and carrier of water and she as a grinder of corn. One day she said to Ali: "I have ground until my hands are blistered."

"I have drawn water until I have pains in my chest," said Ali and went on to suggest to Fatimah: "God has given your father some captives of war, so go and ask him to give you a servant."

Reluctantly, she went to the Prophet who said: "What has brought you here, my little daughter?" "I came to give you greetings of peace," she said, for in awe of him she could not bring herself to ask what she had intended.

"What did you do?" asked Ali when she returned alone.

"I was ashamed to ask him," she said. So the two of them went together but the Prophet felt they were less in need than others.

"I will not give to you," he said, "and let the Ahl as-Suffah (poor Muslims who stayed in the mosque) be tormented with hunger. I have not enough for their keep..."

Ali and Fatimah returned home feeling somewhat dejected but that night, after they had gone to bed, they heard the voice of the Prophet asking permission to enter. Welcoming him, they both rose to their feet, but he told them:

"Stay where you are," and sat down beside them. "Shall I not tell you of something better than that which you asked of me?" he asked and when they said yes he said: "Words which Jibril taught me, that you should say "Subhaan Allah- Glory be to God" ten ti mes after every Prayer, and ten times "AI hamdu lillah - Praise be to God," and ten times "Allahu Akbar - God is Great." And that when you go to bed you should say them thirty-three times each."

Ali used to say in later years: "I have never once failed to say them since the Messenger of God taught them to us."

There are many reports of the hard and difficult times which Fatimah had to face. Often there was no food in her house. Once the Prophet was hungry. He went to one after another of his wives' apartments but there was no food. He then went to Fatimah's ho use and she had no food either. When he eventually got some food, he sent two loaves and a piece of meat to Fatimah. At another time, he went to the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari and from the food he was given, he saved some for her. Fatimah also knew tha t the Prophet was without food for long periods and she in turn would take food to him when she could. Once she took a piece of barley bread and he, said to her: "This is the first food your father has eaten for three days."

Through these acts of kindness she showed how much she loved her father; and he loved her, really loved her in return.

Once he returned from a journey outside Madinah. He went to the mosque first of all and prayed two rakats as was his custom. Then, as he often did, he went to Fatimah's house before going to his wives. Fatimah welcomed him and kissed his face, his mouth and his eyes and cried.

"Why do you cry?" the Prophet asked.

"I see you, O Rasul Allah," she said, "Your color is pale and sallow and your clothes have become worn and shabby." ,P."O Fatimah," the Prophet replied tenderly, "don't cry for Allah has sent your father with a mission which He would cause to affect every house on the face of the earth whether it be in towns, villages or tents (in the desert) bringing either glory or h umiliation until this mission is fulfilled just as night (inevitably) comes."

With such comments Fatimah was often taken from the harsh realities of daily life to get a glimpse of the vast and far-reaching vistas opened up by the mission entrusted to her noble father.

Fatimah eventually returned to live in a house close to that of the Prophet. The place was donated by an Ansari who knew that the Prophet would rejoice in having his daughter as his neighbor. Together they shared in the joys and the triumphs, the sorrow s and the hardships of the crowded and momentous Madinah days and years.

In the middle of the second year after the Hijrah, her sister Ruqayyah fell ill with fever and measles. This was shortly before the great campaign of Badr. Uthman, her husband, stayed by her bedside and missed the campaign. Ruqayyah died just before her father returned. On his return to Madinah, one of the first acts of the Prophet was to visit her grave.

Fatimah went with him. This was the first bereavement they had suffered within their closest family since the death of Khadijah. Fatimah was greatly distressed by the loss of her sister. The tears poured from her eyes as she sat beside her father at the edge of the grave, and he comforted her and sought to dry her tears with the corner of his cloak.

The Prophet had previously spoken against lamentations for the dead, but this had lead to a misunderstanding, and when they returned from the cemetery the voice of Umar was heard raised in anger against the women who were weeping for the martyrs of Badr a nd for Ruqayyah.

"Umar, let them weep," he said and then added: "What comes from the heart and from the eye, that is from God and His mercy, but what comes from the hand and from the tongue, that is from Satan." By the hand he meant the beating of breasts and the smiting of cheeks, and by the tongue he meant the loud clamor in which women often joined as a mark of public sympathy.

Uthman later married the other daughter of the Prophet, Umm Kulthum, and on this account came to be known as Dhu-n Nurayn - Possessor of the Two Lights.

The bereavement which the family suffered by the death of Ruqayyah was followed by happiness when to the great joy of all the believers Fatimah gave birth to a boy in Ramadan of the third year after the Hijrah. The Prophet spoke the words of the Adhan int o the ear of the new-born babe and called him al-Hasan which means the Beautiful One.

One year later, she gave birth to another son who was called al-Husayn, which means "little Hasan" or the little beautiful one. Fatimah would often bring her two sons to see their grandfather who was exceedingly fond of them. Later he would take them to t he Mosque and they would climb onto his back when he prostrated. He did the same with his little granddaughter Umamah, the daughter of Zaynab.

In the eighth year after the Hijrah, Fatimah gave birth to a third child, a girl whom she named after her eldest sister Zaynab who had died shortly before her birth. This Zaynab was to grow up and become famous as the "Heroine of Karbala". Fatimah's four th child was born in the year after the Hijrah. The child was also a girl and Fatimah named her Umm Kulthum after her sister who had died the year before after an illness.

It was only through Fatimah that the progeny of the Prophet was perpetuated. All the Prophet's male children had died in their infancy and the two children of Zaynab named Ali and Umamah died young. Ruqayyah's child Abdullah also died when he was no t yet two years old. This is an added reason for the reverence which is accorded to Fatimah.

Although Fatimah was so often busy with pregnancies and giving birth and rearing children, she took as much part as she could in the affairs of the growing Muslim community of Madinah. Before her marriage, she acted as a sort of hostess to the poor and d estitute Ahl as-Suffah. As soon as the Battle of Uhud was over, she went with other women to the battlefield and wept over the dead martyrs and took time to dress her father's wounds. At the Battle of the Ditch, she played a major supportive role together with other women in preparing food during the long and difficult siege. In her camp, she led the Muslim women in prayer and on that place there stands a mosque named Masjid Fatimah, one of seven mosques where the Muslims stood guard and performed their d evotions.

Fatimah also accompanied the Prophet when he made Umrah in the sixth year after the Hijrah after the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. In the following year, she and her sister Umm Kulthum, were among the mighty throng of Muslims who took part with the Prophet in th e liberation of Makkah. It is said that on this

occasion, both Fatimah and Umm Kulthum visited the home of their mother Khadijah and recalled memories of their childhood and memories of jihad, of long struggles in the early years of the Prophet's mission .

In Ramadan of the tenth year just before he went on his Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet confided to Fatimah, as a secret not yet to be told to others:

"Jibril recited the Quran to me and I to him once every year, but this year he has recited it with me twice. I cannot but think that my time has come."

On his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet did become seriously ill. His final days were spent in the apartment of his wife Aishah. When Fatimah came to visit him, Aishah would leave father and daughter together.

One day he summoned Fatimah. When she came, he kissed her and whispered some words in her ear. She wept. Then again he whispered in her ear and she smiled. Aishah saw and asked:

"You cry and you laugh at the same time, Fatimah? What did the Messenger of God say to you?" Fatimah replied:

"He first told me that he would meet his Lord after a short while and so I cried. Then he said to me: 'Don't cry for you will be the first of my household to join me.' So I laughed."

Not long afterwards the noble Prophet passed away. Fatimah was grief-striken and she would often be seen weeping profusely. One of the companions noted that he did not see Fatimah, may God be pleased with her, laugh after the death of her father.

One morning, early in the month of Ramadan, just less than five month after her noble father had passed away, Fatimah woke up looking unusually happy and full of mirth. In the afternoon of that day, it is said that she called Salma bint Umays who was loo king after her. She asked for some water and had a bath. She then put on new clothes and perfumed herself. She then asked Salma to put her bed in the courtyard of the house. With her face looking to the heavens above, she asked for her husband Ali.

He was taken aback when he saw her lying in the middle of the courtyard and asked her what was wrong. She smiled and said: "I have an appointment today with the Messenger of God."

Ali cried and she tried to console him. She told him to look after their sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn and advised that she should be buried without ceremony. She gazed upwards again, then closed her eyes and surrendered her soul to the Mighty Creator.

She, Fatimah the Resplendent One, was just twenty nine years old.

From Alim® Online

Fayruz Ad-Daylami

From Alim® Online

When the Prophet, peace be on him, returned to Madinah from the Farewell Pilgrimage in the tenth year after the Hijrah, he fell ill, News of his illness spread rapidly throughout the Arabian peninsula. Sincere Muslims everywhere were greatly saddened by the news but for others it was a time to disclose hidden hopes and ambitions and reveal their real attitudes to Islam and the noble Prophet.

In al-Yamamah, Musaylamah the Imposter renounced Islam. So too did Tulayhah al-Asadi in the land of the Asad. And in the Yemen, al-Aswad al-Ansi also became an apostate. More than that, these three imposters claimed that they were prophets sent to their respective peoples just as Muhammad the son of Abdullah was sent to the Quraysh.

Al-Aswad al-Ansi was a soothsayer who practised magic arts. But he was no minor magician or fortuneteller who dabbled in his evil arts in obscurity. He was powerful and influential and possessed a strange power of speech that mesmerized the hearts of his listeners and captivated the minds of the masses with his false claims. With his wealth and power he managed to attract not just the masses but people of status as well. When he appeared before people he normally wore a mask in order to surround himself with an air of mystery, awe and reverence.

In the Yemen at that time, a section of the people who had much prestige and influence were the "Abna". They were the scions of Persian fathers who ruled Yemen as part of the Sasanian Empire. Their mothers were local Arabs. Fayruz al-Daylami was one of t hese Yemeni Abna.

At the time of the appearance of Islam, the most powerful of the Abna was Badhan who ruled Yemen on behalf of the Chosroes of Persia. When Badban became convinced of the truth of the Prophet Muhammad and the Divine nature of his mission he renounced his a llegiance to the Chosroes and accepted Islam. His people followed him in tiffs. The Prophet confirmed him in his dominion and he ruled the Yemen until his death shortly before the appearance of al-Aswad al-Ansi.

Al-Aswad's tribe, the Banu Mudh-hij, were the first to respond positively to his claims to prophethood. With this tribal force he mounted a raid on San'a. He killed the governor, Shahr the son of Badhan and took his wife to himself. From San'a he raided o ther regions. Through his swift and startling strikes, a vast region from Hadramawt to at-Taif and from al-Ahsa to Aden came under his influence.

What helped al-Aswad in deceiving the people and drawing them to him was his guile and cunning which knew no bounds. To his followers he alleged that an angel visited him, disclosed revelations to him and gave him intelligence of people and their affairs . What allowed him to appear to bear out these claims were the spies he employed and despatched everywhere, to bring him news of people and their circumstances, their secrets and their problems, their hopes and their fears.

Reports were brought back in secrecy to him and when he met anyone, especially those in need, he could give the impression that he had prior knowledge of their needs and problems. In this way he astonished people and confounded their thoughts. He acquired a large following and his mission spread like wildfire.

When news of al-Aswad's apostasy and his activities throughout the Yemen reached the Prophet, peace be on him, he despatched about ten of Iris companions with letters to those of his companions in the Yemen whom he felt he could trust. He urged them to co nfront the blind fitnah with faith and resolve, and he ordered them to get rid of al-Aswad by any means possible.

All who received the Prophet's missives set about to carry out his orders implicitly. In the forefront of these was Fayruz ad-Daylami and those of the Abna who were with him. Let us leave Fayruz to relate his extraordinary story:

"I and those of the Abna who were with me never for one moment had any doubt about the religion of God. No belief in the enemy of God entered the heart of any one of us. (In fact) we waited for opportunities to get hold of al-Aswad and eliminate him by an y means.

When we received the letters of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, we felt strengthened in our mutual resolve and each one determined to do what he could

Because of his considerable success, pride and vanity took hold of al-Aswad al-Ansi. He bragged to the commander of his army, Qays ibn Abd Yaghuth, saying how powerful he was. His attitude and relationship towards his commander changed so much so that Qays felt that he was not safe from Iris violence and oppression.

My cousin, Dadhawayh, and I went to Qays and informed him of what the Prophet, peace and blessings be on him, had told us and we invited him to "make lunch" out of the man (al-Aswad) before he could "make supper" out of him. He was receptive to our propo sal and regarded us as a Godsend. He disclosed to us some of the secrets of al-Aswad.

The three of us vowed to confront the apostate from within (his castle) while our other brothers would confront him from without. We were all of the view that our cousin Dadha, whom al-Aswad had taken to himself after the killing of her husband, should jo in us. We went to al-Aswad's castle and met her. I said to her:

'O cousin, you know what harm and evil this man has visited upon you and us. He has killed your husband and dishonored the women of your people. He has massacred their husbands and wrested political authority from their hands.

'This is a letter from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, to us in particular and to the people of Yemen in general in which he asks us to put an end to this fitnah. Would you help us in this matter?' 'On what can I help you? sh e asked. 'On his expulsion...' I said. 'Rather on his assassination,' she suggested. 'By God, I had nothing else in mind,' I said, 'but I was afraid to suggest this to you.' 'By Him Who has sent Muhammad with the Truth as a bringer or' good tidings and as a warner, I have not doubted in my religion for a moment. God has not created a man more detestable to me than the devil (al-Aswad). By God, from the time I saw him, I have only known him to be a corrupt and sinful person who does not promote any truth and does not stop from committing any abominable deed.' ''How can we go about eliminating him?' I asked.

'He is well-guarded and protected. There is not a place in his castle which is not surrounded by guards. There is one broken down and abandoned room though which opens out into open land. In the evening during the first third of the night, go there. You will find inside weapons and a light. You will find me waiting for you...' she said.

'But getting through to a room in a castle such as this is no easy task. Someone might pass and alert the guards and that will be the end of us' I said. 'You are not far from the truth. But I have a suggestion.' 'What is it?' I asked.

'Send a man tomorrow whom you trust as one of the workers. I shall tell him to make an opening in the room from the inside so that it should be easy to enter.' 'That's a brilliant suggestion you have,' I said.

I then left her and told the two others what we had decided and they gave their blessings to the plan. We left straightaway to get ourselves prepared. We informed a select group of believers who were assisting us to prepare themselves and gave them the pa ssword (to signal the time they could storm the castle). The time was to be dawn of the following day.

When night fell and the appointed time came, I went with my two companions to the opening in the room and uncovered it. We entered the room and put on the lamp. We found the weapons and proceeded to the apartment of God's enemy. There was our cousin stan ding at his door. She pointed out where he was and we entered. He was asleep and snoring. I plunged the blade in his neck and he bellowed like a bull being slaughtered. When the guards heard this, they ran quickly to his apartment and asked: 'What is this ?'

'Don't worry. You can go. The prophet of God is receiving revelation,' she said, and they left. We stayed in the castle until the break of dawn. Then I stood on a wall of the castle and shouted:

'Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!' and went on with the adhan until I reached': 'Ashhadu anna Muhammadur Rasulullah ! (Then I added) 'Wa ashhadu anna al Aswad al-Ansi kadh-dhab ! I testify that al-Aswad is an imposter.'

That was the password, Muslims then converged on

the castle from every direction. The guards took fright

when they heard the adhan and were confronted by the

Muslims shouting Allahu Akbar.

By sunrise, the mission was accomplished. When it was full light, we sent a letter to the Messenger of God giving him the good news of the death of God's enemy.

When the messengers reached Madinah they found that the Prophet, may the blessings of God be on him, had passed away that very night. They learned however that Revelation had been communicated to the Prophet informing him of the death of al-Aswad al-Ansi the night it took place."

Years later, the Khalifah Umar ibn al-Khattab wrote to Fayruz ad-Daylami, may God be pleased with them both, saying:

"I have heard that you are busy eating white bread and honey (meaning no doubt that he was leading an easy life). When this my letter reaches you, come to me with the blessings of God so that you may campaign in the path of God."

Fayruz did as he was commanded. He went to Madinah and sought an audience with Umar. Umar granted him permission. Evidently there was a crowd waiting to see Umar and a Quraysh youth pushed

Fayruz. Fayruz raised his hand and hit the Quraysh youth on the no se.

The youth went to Umar who asked: "Who did that to you?"

"Fayruz. He is at the door," said the youth. Fayruz entered and Umar asked: "What is this, O Fayruz?"

"O Amir al-Muminin," said Fayruz. "You wrote to me. You didn't write to him. You gave me permission to enter and you didn't give him permission. He wanted to enter in my turn before me. Then I did what you have been told."

"Al-Qisas," pronounced Umar in judgment, meaning that Fayruz had to receive the same blow from the youth in retaliation. "Must it be so?" asked Fayruz. "It must be so," insisted Umar.

Fayruz then got down on his knees and the youth stood up to exact his retaliation. Umar said to him then: "Wait a moment, young man, so that I can tell you something which I heard from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. I heard the Messenger of God say one evening: 'This night, al-Aswad al-Ansi the Imposter has been killed. The righteous servant Fayruz ad-Daylami has killed him' Umar then asked the youth:

"Do you see yourself taking retribution on him after you have heard this from the Messenger of God?" "I forgive him," said the youth, "after you have told me this from the Prophet." "Do you think," said Fayruz to Umar, "that my escape from what I have don e is a confession to him and that his forgiveness is not given under duress?" "Yes," replied Umar and Fayruz then declared: "I testily to you that my sword, my horse and thirty thousand of my money is a gift to him."

"Your forgiveness has paid off, O brother Quraysh and you have become rich," said Umar no doubt impressed by the sense of remorse and the spontaneous generosity of Fayruz, the righteous.

From Alim® Online

Habib Ibn Zayd Al-Ansari

He grew up in a home filled with the fragrance of iman, and in a family where everyone was imbued with the spirit of sacrifice. Habib's father, Zayd ibn Asim, was one of the first persons in Yathrib to accept Islam and his mother, the celebrated Nusaybah bint Kab known as Umm Ammarah, was the first woman to bear arms in defence of Islam and in support of the blessed Prophet.

Habib, still at a tender age, was privileged to go with his mother, father, maternal aunt and brother to Makkah with the pioneering group of seventy five who pledged fealty to the Prophet at Aqabah and played a decisive role in shaping the early history o f Islam.

At Aqabah, in the darkness of the night, the young Habib stretched out his small hand and pledged loyalty to the Prophet. From that day, the Prophet, peace and blessings of God on him, became dearer to Habib than his own mother or father and Islam became more important to him than any care for his personal safety.

Habib did not participate in the Battle of Badr because he was too young. Neither did he have the opportunity to take part in the battle of Uhud because he was still considered too young to bear arms. Thereafter, however, he took part in all the engagemen ts which the Prophet fought and in all he distinguished himself by his bravery and willingness to sacrifice. Although each of these battles had its own importance and was demanding in its own way, they served to prepare Habib for what was to prove the mos t terrible encounter of his life, the violence of which is profoundly soul-shaking.

Let us follow this awesome story from the beginning. By the ninth year after the Hijrah, Islam had spread widely and had become the dominant force in the Arabian peninsula. Delegations of tribes from all over the land converged on Makkah to meet the Messe nger of God, peace be upon him, and announce before him, their acceptance of Islam.

Among these delegations was one from the highlands of Najd, from the Banu Hanilab. At the outskirts of Makkah, the members of the delegation tethered their mounts and appointed Musaylamah ibn Habib as their spokesman and representative. Musaylamah went to the Prophet, peace be upon him. and announced his people's acceptance of Islam. The Prophet welcomed them and treated them most generously. Each, including Musaylamah, was presented with a gift.

On his return to Najd the ambitious and self-seeking Musaylamah recanted and gave up his allegiance to the Prophet. He stood among the people and proclaimed that a prophet had been sent by God to the Banu Hanifah just as God had sent Muhammad ibn Abdullah to the Quraysh.

For various reasons and under a variety of pressures, the Banu Hanilab began to rally around him. Most followed him out of tribal loyalty or asabiyyah. Indeed one member of the tribe declared: "I testify that Muhammad is indeed truthful and that Musaylama h is indeed an imposter. But the imposter of Rabiah (the tribal confederation to which the Banu Hanilab belonged) is dearer to me that the genuine and truthful person from Mudar (the tribal confederation to which the Quraysh belonged)."

Before long, the number of Musaylamah's followers increased and he felt powerful, powerful enough to

write the following letter to the Prophet, peace be upon him: "From Musaylamah, the messenger of God to Muhammad, the messenger of God. Peace be on you. I am prepared to share this mission with you. I shall have (control over) half the land and you shall have the other half. But the Quraysh are an aggressive people."

Musaylamah despatched two of his men with the letter to the Prophet. When the letter was read to the Prophet, he asked the two men: "And what do you yourselves say about this matter?" "We affirm what the letter says," they replied. "By God," said the Prop het, "were it not for the fact that emissaries are not killed I would have smitten both your necks." He then wrote to Musaylamah: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Compassionate. From Muhammad the Messenger of God, to Musaylamah the imposter.

Peace be upon whoever follows the guidance. God will bequeath the earth to whosoever of His servants He wishes and the final triumph will be for those who are careful of their duty to God." He sent the letter with the two men.

Musaylamah's evil and corrupting influence continued to spread and the Prophet considered it necessary to send another letter to him inviting him to abandon his misguided ways. The Prophet chose Habib ibn Zayd to take this letter to Musaylamah. Habib was by this time in the prime of his youth and a firm believer in the truth of Islam with every fibre of his being.

Habib undertook his mission eagerly and proceeded as quickly as he could to the highlands of the Najd, the territory of the Banu Hanilab. He presented the letter to Musaylamah.

Musaylamah was convulsed with bitter rage. His face was terrible to behold. He ordered Habib to be put in chains and to be brought back before him the following day.

On the following day, Musaylamah presided over his assembly. On his right and on his left were his senior advisers, there to further his evil cause. The common people were allowed to enter. He then ordered Habib, shackled in his chains, to be brought befo re him.

Habib stood in the midst of this crowded, hate-filled gathering. He remained upright, dignified and proud like a sturdy spear firmly implanted in the ground, unyielding.

Musaylamah turned to him and asked: "Do you testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God?" "Yes," Habib replied. "I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God."

Musaylamah was visibly angry. "And do you testify that I am the Messenger of God?" He was almost insisting, rather than questioning. "My ears have been blocked against hearing what you claim," replied Habib.

Musaylamah's face changed color, his lips trembled in anger and he shouted to his executioner, "Cut off a piece of his body."

With sword in hand, the menacing executioner advanced towards Habib and severed one of his limbs.

Musaylamah then put the same question to him once more and Habib's answers were the same. He affirmed his belief in Muhammad as the Messenger of God and at the expense of his own life he refused to acknowledge the messengership of any other. Musaylamah th ereupon ordered his henchman to cut off another part of Habib's body. This fell to the ground beside the other severed limb. The people looked on in amazement at Habib's composure and steadfastness.

Faced with Musaylamah's persistent questioning and the terrible blows of his henchman, Habib kept on repeating:

"I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." Habib could not survive this torture and these inhuman atrocities much longer and he soon passed away. On his pure lips, as his life-blood ebbed away, was the name of the blessed Prophet to whom he had pl edged loyalty on the night of Aqabah, the name of Muhammad, the Messenger of God.

News of Habib's fate reached his mother and her reaction was simply to say: "It was for such a situation that I prepared him... He pledged allegiance to the Prophet on the night of Aqabah as a small child and today as an adult he has given his life for th e Prophet. If God were to allow me to get near to Musaylamah, I would certainly make his daughters smite their cheeks and lament over him."

The day that she wished for was not long in coming. After the death of the Prophet, peace be on him, Abu Bakr declared war on the imposter. With the Muslim army that went out to confront the forces of Musaylamah were Habib's mother, Nusaybah, and another of her courageous sons, Abdullah ibn Zayd.

At the Battle of Yamamah which ensued, Nusaybah was seen cutting through the ranks of fighting men like a lioness and calling out: "Where is the enemy of God? Show me the enemy of God ?" When she eventually reached Musaylamah, he had already perished. She looked at the body of the vain imposter and cruel tyrant and felt serene. A grave threat to the Muslims had been removed and the death of her beloved son, Habib, had been avenged.

At Habib's death, the noble Prophet had commended him and his entire family and had prayed: "May God bless this household. May God have mercy on this household."

Hakim ibn Hazm

History has recorded that he is the only person who was born inside the Kabah itself.

Together with a group of friends, his mother had gone inside this ancient House of God to inspect it. On that particular day it was open because of a festive occasion. She was pregnant and labor pains suddenly gripped her. She was unable to leave the Kabah. A leather mat was brought to her and she gave birth on it. The child was named Hakim. His father was Hazm who was the son of Khuwaylid. Hakim was therefore the nephew of the Lady Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwaylid. may Allah be pleased with her.

Hakim grew up in a wealthy and noble family which enjoyed a high status in Makkan society. He was also an intelligent and well-mannered person who was well respected by his people. He was held in such esteem that he was given the responsibility of the rifadah which involved giving assistance to the needy and those who had lost their property during the season of pilgrimage. He took this responsibility seriously and would even help needy pilgrims from his own resources.

Hakim was a very close friend of the Prophet, peace be on him, before the latter's call to prophethood. Even though he was five years older than the Prophet, he used to spend much time talking to him and enjoying hours of pleasant companionship. Muhammad in his turn felt great affection for Hakim.

Their relationship was further strengthened when the Prophet married his aunt, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.

What is truly amazing is that in spite of the close friendship between Hakim and the Prophet, Hakim did not become a Muslim until the conquest of Makkah, more than twenty years after the start of the Prophet's mission. One would have thought that someone like Hakim whom God had blessed with a sound intellect and who was so well-disposed to the Prophet, would have been among the first to believe in him and follow the guidance he brought. But that was not to be.

Just as we are astonished at the late acceptance of Islam on the part of Hakim, he himself later in life was also amazed. In fact, as soon as he accepted Islam and tasted the sweetness of iman (faith), he began to feel deep regret for every moment of his life as a mushrik and a denier of God's religion and of His Prophet.

His son once saw him weeping after his acceptance of Islam and asked: "Why are you weeping, my father'?" "Many things cause me to weep, my dear son. The most grievous is the length of time it took for me to become a Muslim. Acceptance of Islam would have given me so many opportunities to do good which I missed even if I were to have spent the earth in gold. My life was spared at the battle of Badr and also at the battle of Uhud. After Uhud. I said to myself. I would not help any Quraysh against Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, and I would not leave Makkah. Then, whenever I felt like accepting Islam I would look at other men among the Quraysh. men of power and maturity who remained firmly attached to the ideas and practices of Jahiliyyah and I would fall in line with them and their neighbors... Oh, how I wish I had not done so. Nothing has destroyed us except the blind following of our forefathers and elders. Why should I not weep, my son?"

The Prophet himself was puzzled. A man of sagacity and understanding like Hakim ibn Hazm, how could Islam remain "hidden" from him?. For a long time, the Prophet had dearly hoped that he and a group of persons like him would take the initiative and become Muslims. On the night before the liberation of Makkah, he, may God bless him and grant him peace, said to his companions:

"There are four persons in Makkah whom I consider to be above having any dealing with shirk and I would dearly like them to accept Islam." "Who are they, O Messenger of God?" asked the companions. "Attab ibn Usayd, Jubayr ibn Mutim, Hakim ibn Hazm and Suhayl ibn Amr," replied the Prophet. By the grace of God, they all became Muslims.

When the Prophet, peace be on him, entered Makkah to liberate the city from polytheism and the ways of ignorance and immorality, he ordered his herald to proclaim: "Whoever declares that there is no god but Allah alone, that He has no partner and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, he is safe...

Whoever sits at the Kabah and lays down his weapons, he is safe. Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan, he is safe.

Whoever enters the house of Hakim ibn Hazm, he is safe..." The house of Abu Sufyan was in the higher part of Makkah and that of Hakim was in the lower part of the city. By proclaiming these houses as places of sanctuary, the Prophet wisely accorded recognition to both Abu Sufyan and Hakim, weakening any thought they might have of resisting and making it easier for them to be more favorably disposed to him and his mission.

Hakim embraced Islam wholeheartedly. He vowed to himself that he would atone for whatever he had done during his Jahili days and that whatever amounts he had spent in opposing the Prophet, he would spend the same amounts in the cause of Islam.

He owned the Dar an-Nadwah, an important and historic building in Makkah, where the Quraysh held their conferences during the days of Jahiliyyah. In this building the Quraysh leaders and chieftains would gather to plot against the Prophet.

Hakim decided to get rid of it and cut himself off from its past associations which were now so painful to him. He sold the building for one hundred thousand dirhams. A Quraysh youth exclaimed to him: "You have sold something of great historical value and pride to the Quraysh, uncle."

"Come now, my son," replied Hakim. "All vain pride and glory has now gone and all that remains of value is taqwa - consciousness of God. I have only sold the building in order to acquire a house in Paradise. I swear to you that I have given the proceeds from it to be spent in the path of God Almighty."

Hakim ibn Hazm performed the Hajj after becoming a Muslim. He took with him one hundred fine camels and sacrificed them all in order to achieve nearness to God. In the following Hajj, he stood on Arafat. With him were one hundred slaves. To each he gave a pendant of silver on which was engraved: "Free for the sake of God Almighty from Hakim ibn Hazm." On a third Hajj, he took with him a thousand sheep - yes a thousand sheep and sacrificed them all at Mina to feed the poor Muslims in order to attain nearness to God.

While Hakim was generous in his spending for the sake of God, he also still liked to have much. After the battle of Hunayn, he asked the Prophet for some of the booty which the Prophet gave. He then asked for more and the Prophet gave him more. Hakim was still a newcomer to Islam and the Prophet was

more generous to newcomers so as to reconcile their hearts to Islam. Hakim ended up with a large share of the booty. But the Prophet peace be upon him, told him:

"O Hakim! This wealth is indeed sweet and attractive. Whoever takes it and is satisfied will be blessed by it and whoever takes out of greed will not be blessed. He would be like someone who eats and is not satisfied. The upper hand is better than the lower hand (it is better to give than to receive)."

The kind words of advice had a deep and immediate effect on Hakim. He was mortified and said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of God! By Him who has sent you with the truth, I shall not ask anyone after you for anything."

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Hakim was called several times to collect his stipend from the Bayt al-mal but he refused to take any money. He did the same during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab whereupon Umar addressed the Muslims: "I testify to you, O Muslims, that I have called Hakim to collect his stipend but he refuses."

Hakim remained faithful to his word. He did not take anything from anyone until he passed away. From the Prophet, he had learnt the great truth that contentment is riches beyond compare.

Hudhayfah Ibn Al-Yaman

"If you wish you may consider yourself among the Muhajirin or, if you wish, you may consider yourself one of the Ansar. Choose whichever is dearer to you."

With these words, the Prophet, peace be upon him, addressed Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman when he met him for the first time in Makkah. How did Hudhayfah come to have this choice'?

His father, al-Yaman was a Makkan from the tribe of Abs. He had killed someone and had been forced to leave Makkah. He had settled down in Yathrib, becoming an ally (halif) of the Banu al-Ash-hal and marrying into the tribe. A son named Hudhayfah was born to him. The restrictions on his returning to Makkah were eventually lifted and he divided his time between Makkah and Yathrib but stayed more in Yathrib and was more attached to it.

This was how Hudhayfah had a Makkan origin but a Yathribite upbringing. When the rays of Islam began to radiate over the Arabian peninsula, a delegation from the Abs tribe, which included al-Yaman, went to the Prophet and announced their acceptance of Isl am. That was before the Prophet migrated to Yathrib.

Hudhayfah grew up in a Muslim household and was taught by both his mother and father who were among the first persons from Yathrib to enter the religion of God. He therefore became a Muslim before meeting the Prophet, peace be upon him.

Hudhayfah longed to meet the Prophet. From an early age, he was keen on following whatever news there was about him. The more he heard, the more his affection for the Prophet grew and the more he longed to meet him.

He eventually journeyed to Makkah, met the Prophet and put the question to him, "Am I a muhajir or am I an Ansari, O Rasulullah?"

"If you wish you may consider yourself among the muhajirin, or if you wish you may consider yourself one of the Ansar. Choose whichever is dearer to you," replied the Prophet. "Well, I am an Ansari. O Rasulullah," decided Hudhayfah.

At Madinah, after the Hijrah, Hudhayfah became closely attached to the Prophet. He participated in all the military engagements except Badr. Explaining why he missed the Battle of Badr, he said: "I would not have missed Badr if my father and I had not bee n outside Madinah. The disbelieving Quraysh met us and asked where we were going. We told them we were going to Madinah and they asked whether we intended to meet Muhammad. We insisted that we only wanted to go to Madinah. They allowed us to go only after they extracted from us an undertaking not to help Muhammad against them and not to fight along with them.

"When we came to the Prophet we told him about our undertaking to the Quraysh and asked him what should we do. He said that we should ignore the undertaking and seek God's help against them."

Hudhayfah participated in the Battle of Uhud with his father. The pressure on Hudhayfah during the battle was great but he acquitted himself well and emerged safe and sound. A rather different fate, however, awaited his father.

Before the battle, the Prophet, peace be on him, left alYaman, Hudhayfah's father, and Thabit ibn Waqsh with the other non-combatants including women and children. This was because they were both quite old. As the fighting grew fiercer, al-Yaman said to h is friend: "You have no father (meaning you have no cares). What are we waiting for? We both have only a short time to live. Why don't we take our swords and join the Messenger of God, peace be on him? Maybe, God will bless us with martyrdom beside His Pr ophet."

They quickly prepared for battle and were soon in the thick of the fighting. Thabit ibn Waqsh was blessed with shahdah at the hands of the mushrikin. The father of Hudhayfah, however was set upon by some Muslims who did not recognize who he was. As they f layed him, Hudhayfah cried out: "My father! My father! It's my father!"

No one heard him. The old man fell, killed in error by the swords of his own brothers in faith. They were filled with pain and remorse. Grieved as he was, Hudhayfah said to them: "May God forgive you for He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy."

The Prophet, peace be on him, wanted diyah (compensation) to be paid to Hudhayfah for the death of his father but Hudhayfah said: "He was simply seeking shahadah and he attained it. O Lord, bear witness that I donate the compensation for him to the Muslim s."

Because of this attitude, Hudhayfah's stature grew in the eyes of the Prophet, peace be on him. Hudhayfah had three qualities which particularly impressed the Prophet: his unique intelligence which he employed in dealing with difficult situations; his qui ck wittedness and spontaneous response to the call of action, and his ability to keep a secret even under persistent questioning.

A noticeable policy of the Prophet was to bring out and use the special qualities and strengths of each individual companion of his. In deploying his companions, he was careful to choose the right man for the right task. This he did to excellent advantage in the case of Hudhayfah.

One of the gravest problems the Muslims of Madinah had to face was the existence in their midst of hypocrites (munafiqun) particularly from among the Jews and their allies. Although many of them had declared their acceptance of Islam, the change was only superficial and they continued to plot and intrigue against the Prophet and the Muslims.

Because of Hudhayfah's ability to keep a secret, the Prophet, peace be on him, confided in him the names of the munafiqin. It was a weighty secret which the Prophet did not disclose to any other off his companions. He gave Hudhayfah the task of watching t he movements of the munafiqin, following their activities, and shielding the Muslims from the sinister danger they represented. It was a tremendous responsibility. The munafiqin, because they acted in secrecy and because they knew all the developments and plans of the Muslims from within presented a greater threat to the community than the outright hostility of the kuffar.

From this time onwards. Hudhayfah was called "The Keeper of the Secret of the Messenger of Allah". Throughout his life he remained faithful to his pledge not to disclose the names of the hypocrites. After the death of the Prophet, the Khalifah often came- to him to seek his advice concerning their movements and activities but he remained tight-lipped and cautious.

Umar was only able to find out indirectly who the hypocrites were. If anyone among the Muslims died, Umar would ask:

"Has Hudhayfah attended his funeral prayer?"

If the reply was 'yes', he would perform the prayer. If the reply was 'no', he became doubtful about the person and refrained from performing the funeral prayer for him.

Once Umar asked Hudhayfah: "Is any of my governors a munafiq?" "One," replied Hudhayfah. "Point him out to me," ordered Umar. "That I shall not do," insisted Hudhayfah who later said that shortly after their conversation Umar dismissed the person just as if he had been guided to him.

Hudhayfah's special qualities were made use of by the Prophet, peace be on him, at various times. One of the most testing of such occasions, which required the use of Hudhayfah's intelligence and his presence of mind, was during the Battle of the Ditch. T he Muslims on that occasion were surrounded by enemies. The seige they had been placed under had dragged on. The Muslims were undergoing severe hardship and difficulties. They had expended practically all their effort and were utterly exhausted. So intens e was the strain that some even began to despair.

The Quraysh and their allies, meanwhile, were not much better off. Their strength and determination had been sapped. A violent wind overturned their tents, extinguished their fires and pelted their faces and eyes with gusts of sand and dust.

In such decisive moments in the history of warfare, the side that loses is the one that despairs first and the one that wins is the one that holds out longer. The role of army intelligence in such situations often proves to be a crucial factor in determin ing the outcome of the battle.

At this stage of the confrontation the Prophet, peace be on him, felt he could use the special talents and experience of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman. He decided to send Hudhayfah into the midst of the enemy's positions under cover of darkness to bring him the latest information on their situation and morale before he decided on his next move.

Let us now leave Hudhayfah to relate what happened on this mission fraught with danger and even death.

"That night, we were all seated in rows. Abu Sufyan and his men - the mushrikun of Makkah - were in front of us. The Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayzah were at our rear and we were afraid of them because of our wives and children. The night was stygian dark. N ever before was there a darker night nor a wind so strong. So dark was the night that no one could see his fingers and the blast of the wind was like the peel of thunder.

"The hypocrites began to ask the Prophet for permission to leave, saying, 'Our houses are exposed to the enemy.' Anyone who asked the Prophet's permission to leave was allowed to go. Many thus sneaked away until we were left with about three hundred men.< P> "The Prophet then began a round of inspection passing us one by one until he reached me. I had nothing to protect me from the cold except a blanket belonging to my wife which scarcely reached my knees. He came nearer to

me as I lay crouching on the ground and asked: 'Who is this?' 'Hudhayfah,' replied. 'Hudhayfah?' he queried as I huddled myself closer to the ground too afraid to stand up because of the intense hunger and cold. 'Yes, O Messenger of God,' I replied. 'Some thing is happening among the people (meaning the

forces of Abu Sufyan). Infiltrate their encampment and bring me news of what's happening,' instructed the Prophet.

"I set out. At that moment I was the most terrified person of all and felt terribly cold. The Prophet, peace be on him, prayed: 'O Lord, protect him from in front and from behind, from his right and from his left, from above and from below.'

"By God, no sooner had the Prophet, peace be on him, completed his supplication than God removed from my stomach all traces of fear and from my body all the punishing cold. As I turned to go, the Prophet called me back to him and said: 'Hudhayfah, on no a ccount do anything among the people (of the opposing forces) until you come back to me.'

'Yes,' I replied.

"I went on, inching my way under cover of darkness until I penetrated deep into the mushrikin camp and became just like one of them. Shortly afterwards, Abu Sufyan got up and began to address his men:

'O people of the Quraysh, I am about to make a statement to you which I fear would reach Muhammad. Therefore, let every man among you look and make sure who is sitting next to him...'

"On hearing this, I immediately grasped the hand of the man next to me and asked, 'Who are you?' (thus putting him on the defensive and clearing myself). "Abu Sufyan went on:

'O people of the Quraysh, by God, you are not in a safe and secure place. Our horses and camels have perished. The Banu Qurayzah have deserted us and we have had unpleasant news about them. We are buffered by this bitterly cold wind. Our fires do not ligh t and our uprooted tents offer no protection. So get moving. For myself, I am leaving.'

"He went to his camel, untethered and mounted it. He struck it and it stood upright. If the Messenger of God, peace be on him, had not instructed me to do nothing until I returned to him, I would have killed Abu Sufyan then and there with an arrow.

"I returned to the Prophet and found him standing on a blanket performing Salat. When he recognized me, he drew me close to his legs and threw one end of the blanket over me. I informed him of what had happened. He was extremely happy and joyful and gave thanks and praise to

Hudhayfah lived in constant dread of evil and corrupting influences. He felt that goodness and the sources of good in this life were easy to recognize for those who desired good. But it was evil that was deceptive and often difficult to perceive and comba t.

He became something of a great moral philosopher. He always warned people to struggle against evil with all their faculties, with their heart, hands and tongue. Those who stood against evil only with their hearts and tongues, and not with their hands, he considered as having abandoned a part of truth. Those who hated evil only in their hearts but did not combat it with their tongues and hands forsook two parts of truth and those who neither detested nor confronted evil with their hearts, tongues or hands he considered as physically alive but morally dead.

Speaking about 'hearts' and their relationship to guidance and error, he once said: "There are four kinds of hearts. The heart that is encased or atrophied. That is the heart of the kafir or ungrateful disbeliever. The heart that is shaped into thin layer s. That is the heart of the munafiq or hypocrite. The heart that is

open and bare and on which shines a radiant light. That is the heart of the mumin or the believer.

Finally there is the heart in which there is both hypocrisy and faith. Faith is like a tree which thrives with good water and hypocrisy is like an abscess which thrives on pus and blood. Whichever flourishes more, be it the tree of faith or the abscess of hypocrisy, wins control of the heart."

Hudhayfah's experience with hypocrisy and his efforts to combat it gave a touch of sharpness and severity to his tongue. He himself realized this and admitted it with a noble courage: "I went to the Prophet, peace be on him and said: 'O Messenger of God, I have a tongue which is sharp and cutting against my family and I fear that this would lead me to hell-fire.' And the Prophet, peace be upon him, said to me: 'Where do you stand with regard to istighfar - asking forgiveness from Allah? I ask Allah for fo rgiveness a hundred times during the day. "

A pensive man like Hudhayfah, one devoted to thought, knowledge and reflection may not have been expected to perform feats of heroism in battlefields. Yet Hudhayfah was to prove himself one of the foremost Muslim military commanders in the expansion of Is lam into Iraq. He distinguished himself at Hamadan, ar-Rayy, ad-Daynawar, and at the famous Battle of Nihawand.

For the encounter at Nihawand against the Persian forces, Hudhayfah was placed second in command by Umar over the entire Muslim forces which numbered some thirty thousand. The Persian forces outnumbered them by five to one being some one hundred and fifty thousand strong. The first commander of the Muslim army, an-Numan ibn Maqran, fell early in the battle. The second in command, Hudhayfah, immediately took charge of the situation, giving instructions that the death of the commander should not be broadcas t. Under Hudhayfah's daring and inspiring leadership, the Muslims won a decisive victory despite tremendous odds.

Hudhayfah was made governor of important places like Kufa and Ctesiphon (al-Madain). When the news of his appointment as governor of Ctesiphon reached its inhabitants, crowds went out to meet and greet this famous companion of the Prophet of whose piety a nd righteousness they had heard so much. His great role in the conquests of Persia was already a legend.

As the welcoming party waited, a lean, somewhat scrawny man with dangling feet astride a donkey approached. In his hand he held a loaf of bread and some salt and he ate as he went along. When the rider was already in their midst they realized that he was Hudhayfah, the governor for whom they were waiting. They could not contain their surprise. What manner of man was this! They could however be excused for not recognizing him for they were used to the style, the pomp and the grandeur of Persian rulers.

Hudhayfah carried on and people crowded around him. He saw they were expecting him to speak and he cast a searching look at their faces. Eventually, he said: "Beware of places of fitnah and intrigue." "And what," they asked, "are places of intrigue?" He replied: "The doors of rulers where some people go and try to make the ruler or governor believe lies and praise him for (qualities) he does not possess."

With these words, the people were prepared for what to expect from their new governor. They knew at once that there was nothing in the world that he despised more than hypocrisy.

Ikrimah Ibn Abi Jahl

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

He was at the end of the third decade of his life on the day the Prophet made public his call to guidance and truth. He was held in high regard by the Quraysh, being wealthy and of noble lineage. Some others like him, Sa'd ibn abi Waqqas, Mus'ab ibn Umayr and other sons of noble families in Makkah had become Muslims. He too might have followed their example were it not for his father. His father, Abu Jahl, was the foremost proponent of Shirk and one of the greatest tyrants of Makkah. Through torture, he sorely tested the faith of the early believers but they remained steadfast. He used every strategem to make them waver but they continued to affirm the truth.

Ikrimah found himself defending the leadership and authority of his father as he pitted himself against the Prophet. His animosity towards the Prophet, his persecution of his followers and his attempts to block the progress of Islam and the Muslims won the admiration of his father.

At Badr, Abu Jahl led the Makkan polytheists in the battle against the Muslims. He swore by al-Laat and al- Uzza that he would not return to Makkah unless he crushed Muhammad. At Badr he sacrificed three camels to these goddesses. He drank wine and had the music of smglng girls to spur the Quraysh on to fight.

Abu Jahl was among the first to fall in the battle. His son Ikrimah saw him as spears pierced his body and heard him let out his last cry of agony. Ikrimah returned to Makkah leavmg behind the corpse of the Quraysh chieftain, his father. He wanted to bury him in Makkah but the crushing defeat they suffered made this impossible.

From that day, the fire of hatred burned even more fiercely in the heart of Ikrimah. Others whose fathers were killed at Badr, also became more hostile to Muhammad and his followers. This eventually led to the Battle of Uhud.

At Uhud Ikrimah was accompanied by his wife, Umm Hakim. She and other women stood behind the battle lines beating their drums, urging the Quraysh on to battle and upbraiding any horseman who felt inclined to flee.

Leading the right flank of the Quraysh was Khalid ibn Walid. On the left was Ikrimah ibn abi Jahl. The Quraysh inflicted heavy losses on the Muslims and felt that they had avenged themselves for the defeat at Badr. This was not, however, the end of the state of conflict.

At the battle of the Ditch, the Quraysh mushrikun besieged Madinah. It was a long siege. The resources and the patience of the mushrikun were wearing out. Ikrimah, feeling the strain of the siege, saw a place where the ditch, dug by the Muslims, was relatively narrow. With a gigantic effort, he managed to cross. A small group of Quraysh followed him. It was a foolhardy undertaking. One of them was immediately killed and it was only by turning on his heels that Ikrimah managed to save himself.

Nine years after his hijrah, the Prophet returned with thousands of his companions to Makkah. The Quraysh saw them approaching and decided to leave the way open for them because they knew that the

Prophet had given instructions to his commanders not to open hostilities. Ikrimah and some others however went against the consen- sus of the Quraysh and attempted to block the progress of the Muslim forces. Khalid ibn al-Walid, now a Muslim, met and defeated them in a small engagement during which some of Ikrimah's men were killed and others who could, fled. Among those who escaped was Ikrimah himself.

Any standing or influence that Ikrimah may have had was now completely destroyed. The Prophet, peace be upon him, entered Makkah and gave a general pardon and amnesty to all Quraysh who entered the sacred mosque, or who stayed in their houses or who went to the house of Abu Sufyan, the paramount Quraysh leader. However he refused to grant amnesty to a few individuals whom he named. He gave orders that they should be killed even if they were found under the covering of the Ka'bah. At the top of this list was Ikrimah ibn abi Jahl. When Ikrimah learnt of this, he slipped out of Makkah in disguise and headed for the Yemen.

Umm Hakim, Ikrimah's wife, then went to the camp of the Prophet. With her was Hind bint Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan and the mother of Mu'awiyah, and about ten other women who wanted to pledge allegiance to the Prophet. At the camp, were two of his wives, his daughter Fatimah and some women of the Abdulmuttalib clan. Hind was the one who spoke. She was veiled and ashamed of what she had done to Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle, at the battle of Uhud.

"O Messenger of God," she said, "Praise be to God Who has made manifes1 the religion He has chosen for Himself. I beseech you out of the bonds of kinship to treat me well. I am now a believing woman who affirms the Truth of your mission." She then unveiled herself and said:

"I am Hind, the daughter of Utbah, O Messenger of God. "

"Welcome to you," replied the Prophet, peace be on him.

"By God, O Prophet" continued Hind, "there was not a house on earth that I wanted to destroy more than your house. Now, there is no house on earth that I so dearly wish to honour and raise in glory than yours."

Umm Hakim then got up and professed her faith in Islam and said:

"O Messenger of God, Ikrimah has fled from you to the Yemen out of fear that you would kill him. Grant him security and God will grant you security."

"He is secure," promised the Prophet.

Umm Hakim set out immediately in search of Ikrimah. Accompanying her was a Greek slave. When they had gone quite far on the way, he tried to seduce her but she managed to put him off until she came to a settlement of Arabs. She sought their help against him. They tied him up and kept him. Umm Hakim continued on her way until she finally found Ikrimah on the coast of the Red Sea in the region of Tihamah. He was negotiating transport with a Muslim seaman who was saying to him:

"Be pure and sincere and I will transport you."

"How can I be pure?" asked Ikrimah.

"Say, I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

"I have fled from this very thing," said Ikrimah.

At this point, Umm Hakim came up to Ikrimah and said:

"O cousin, I have come to you from the most generous of men, the most righteous of men, the best of men . . . from Muhammad ibn Abdullah. I have asked him for an amnesty for you. This he has granted. So do not destroy yourself."

"Have you spoken to him?"

"Yes, I have spoken to him and he has granted you amnesty," she assured him and he returned with her. She told him about the attempt of their Greek slave to dishonour her and Ikrimah went directly to the Arab settlement where he lay bound and killed him.

At one of their resting places on their way back, Ikrimah wanted to sleep with his wife but she vehemently refused and said:

"I am a Muslimah and you are a lifushrik."

Ikrimah was totally taken aback and said, "Living without you and without your sleeping with me is an impossible situation."

As Ikrimah approached Makkah, the Prophet, peace be upon him, told his companions:

"Ikrimah ibn abi Jahl shall come to you as a believer and a muhajEr (a refugee). Do not insult his father. Insulting the dead causes grief to the living and does not reach the dead."

Ikrimah and his wife came up to where the Prophet was sitting. The Prophet got up and greeted him enthusiastically.

"Muhammad," said Ikrimah, "Umm Hakim has told me that you have granted me an amnesty."

"That's right," said the Prophet, "You are safe."

"To what do you invite?" asked Ikrimah.

"I invite you to testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the servant of Allah and His messenger, to establish Prayer and pay the Zakat and carry out all the other obligations of Islam."

"By God," responded Ikrimah, "You have only called to what is true and you have only commanded that which is good. You lived among us before the start of your mission and then you were the most trustworthy of us in speech and the most righteous of us." Stretching forth his hands he said, "I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger." The Prophet then instructed him to say, "I call on God and those present here to witness that I am a Muslim who is a Mujahid and a Muhajir". This Ikrimah repeated and then said:

"I ask you to ask God for forgiveness for me for all the hostility I directed against you and for whatever insults I expressed in your presence or absence." The Prophet replied with the prayer:

"O Lord, forgive him for all the hostility he directed against me and for all the expeditions he mounted

wishing to put out Your light. Forgive him for whatever he has said or done in my presence or absence to dishonour me." Ikrimah's face beamed with happiness.

"By God, O messenger of Allah, I promise that whatever I have spent obstructing the way of God, I shall spend twice as much in His path and whatever battles I have fought against God's way I shall fight twice as much in His way."

From that day on, Ikrimah was committed to the mission of Islam as a brave horseman in the field of battle and as a steadfast worshipper who would spend much time in mosques reading the book of God. Often he would place the mushaf on his face and say, "The Book of my Lord, the words of my Lord" and he would cry from the fear of God.

Ikrimah remained true to his pledge to the Prophet. Whatever battles the Muslims engaged in thereafter, he participated in them and he was always in the vanguard of the army. At the battle of Yarmuk he plunged into the attack as a thirsty person after cold water on a blistering hot day. In one encounter in which the Muslims were under heavy attack, Ikrimah penetrated deep into the ranks of the Byzantines. Khalid ibn al-Walid rushed up to him and said, "Don't, Ikrimah. Your death will be a severe blow to the Muslims."

"Let us carry on, Khalid," said Ikrimah, now at the peak of motivation. "You had the privilege of being with the Messenger of God before this. As for myself and my father, we were among his bitterest enemies. Leave me now to atone for what I have done in the past. I fought the Prophet on many occasions. Shall I now flee from the Byzantines? This shall never be." Then calling out to the Muslims, he shouted, "Who shall pledge to fight until death?"

Four hundred Muslims including al-Harith ibn Hisham and Ayyash ibn Abi Rabiah responded to his call. They plunged into the battle and fought heroically without the leadership of Khalid ibn al-Walid. Their daring attack paved the way for a decisive Muslim victory.

When the battle was over, the bodies of three wounded mujahideen lay sprawled on the battleground, among them Al-Harith ibn Hisham, Ayyash ibn Abi Rabi'ah and Ikrimah ibn abi Jahl. Al-Harith called for water to drink. As it was brought to him, Ayyash looked at him and Harith said:

"Give it to Ayyash." By the time they got to Ayyash, he had just breathed his last. When they returned to al-Harith and Ikrimah, they found that they too had passed away.

The companions prayed that God may be pleased with them all and grant them refreshment from the spring of Kawthar in Paradise, a refreshment after which there is thirst no more.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Jafar ibn Abi Talib

In spite of his noble standing among the Quraysh, Abu Talib, an uncle of the Prophet, was quite poor. He had a large family and did not have enough means to support them adequately. His poverty-stricken situation became much worse when a severe drought hit the Arabian peninsula. The drought destroyed vegetation and livestock and, it is said, people were driven to eat bones in the struggle for survival.

It was during this time of drought, before his call to prophethood, that Muhammad said to his uncle, al Abbas: "Your brother, Abu Talib, has a large family. People as you see have been afflicted by this severe drought and are facing starvation. Let us go to Abu Talib and take over responsibility for some of his family. It will take one of his sons and you can taken another and we will look after them."

"What you suggest is certainly righteous and commendable," replied al-Abbas, and together they went to Abu Talib and said to him: "We want to ease some of the burden of your family until such time as this distressing period has gone." Abu Talib agreed.

"If you allow me to keep Aqeel (one of his sons older than Ali), then you may do whatever you like ," he said.

It was in this way that Muhammad took Ali into his household and al-Abbas took Jafar into his. Jafar had a very close resemblance to the Prophet. It is said there were five men from the Hashim clan who resembled the Prophet so much, they were often mistaken for him. They were: Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith and Qutham ibn al-Abbas both of whom were cousins of his. As-Saib ibn Ubayd, the grandfather of Imam ash Shafi: al-Hasan ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet, who resembled him most of all; and Jafar ibn Abi Talib.

Jafar stayed with his uncle, al-Abbas, until he was a young man. Then he married Asma bint Umays, a sister of Maymunah who was later to become a wife of the Prophet. After his marriage, Jafar went to live on his own. He and his wife were among the first persons to accept Islam. He became a Muslim at the hands of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, may God be pleased with him.

The young Jafar and his wife were devoted followers of Islam. They bore the harsh treatment and the persecution of the Quraysh with patience and steadfastness because they both realized that the road to Paradise was strewn with. thorns and paved with pain and hardship.

The Quraysh made life intolerable for them both and for their brethren in faith. They tried to obstruct them from observing or performing the duties and rites of Islam. They prevented them from tasting the full sweetness of worship undisturbed. The Quraysh waylaid them at every turn and severely restricted their freedom of movement.

Jafar eventually went to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and sought permission for himself and a small group of the Sahabah, including his wife, to make hijrah to the land of Abyssinia. With great sadness, the Prophet gave his permission. It pained him that these pure and righteous souls should be forced to leave their homes and the familiar and cherished scenes and memories of their childhood and youth, not for any crime but only because they said, "Our Lord is One. Allah is our Lord."

The group of Muhajirin left Makkah bound for the land of Abyssinia. Leading them was Jafar ibn Abi Talib. Soon they settled down in this new land under the care and protection of the Negus, the just and righteous ruler of Abyssinia. For the first time since they became Muslims, they savoured the taste of freedom and security and enjoyed the sweetness of worship undisturbed.

When the Quraysh learnt of the departure of the small group of Muslims and the peaceful life they enjoyed under the protection of the Negus, they made plans to secure their extradition and their return to the great prison that was Makkah. They sent two of their most formidable men, Amr ibn al-Aas and Abdullah ibn Abi Rabiah, to accomplish this task and loaded them with valuable and much sought after presents for the Negus and his bishops.

In Abyssinia, the two Quraysh emissaries first presented their girls to the bishops and to each of them they said: "There are some wicked young people moving about freely in the King's land. They have attacked the religion of their forefathers and caused disunity among their people. When we speak to the King about them, advise him to surrender them to us without his asking them about their religion. The respected leaders of their own people are more aware of them and know better what they believe."

The bishops agreed.

Amr and Abdullah then went to the Negus himself and presented him with gifts which he greatly admired. They said to him: "O King, there is a group of evil persons from among our youth who have escaped to your kingdom. They practice a religion which neither we nor you know. They have forsaken our religion and have not entered into your religion. The respected leaders of their people - from among their own parents and uncles. and from their own clans - have sent us to you to request you to return them. They know best what trouble they have caused."

The Negus looked towards his bishops who said: "They speak the truth, O King. Their own people know them better and are better acquainted with what they have done. Send them back so that they themselves might judge them."

The Negus was quite angry with this suggestion and said: "No. By God, I won't surrender them to anyone until I myself call them and question them about what they have been accused. If what these two men have said is true, then I will hand them over to you. If however it is not so, then I shall protect them so long as they desire to remain under my protection."

The Negus then summoned the Muslims to meet him. Before going, they consulted with one another as a group and agreed that Jafar ibn Abi Talib and no one else should speak on their behalf.

In the court of the Negus, the bishops, dressed in green surplises and impressive headgear, were seated on his right and on his left. The Qurayshite emissaries were also seated when the Muslims entered and took their seats. The Negus turned to them and asked:

"What is this religion which you have introduced for yourself and which has served to cut you off from the religion of your people? You also did not enter my religion nor the religion of any other community."

Jafar ibn Abi Talib then advanced and made a speech that was moving and eloquent and which is still one of the most compelling descriptions of Islam. the appeal of the noble Prophet and the condition of Makkan society at the time. He said: "O King, we were a people in a state of ignorance and immorality, worshipping idols and eating the flesh of dead animals, committing all sorts of abomination and

shameful deeds. breaking the ties of kinship, treating guests badly and the strong among us exploited the weak. "We remained in this state until Allah sent us a Prophet, one of our own people whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and integrity were well-known to us. "He called us to worship Allah alone and to renounce the stones and the idols which we and our ancestors used to worship besides Allah.

"He commanded us to speak the truth, to honor our promises, to be kind to our relations, to be helpful to our neighbors, to cease all forbidden acts, to abstain from bloodshed. to avoid obscenities and false witness, not to appropriate an orphan's property nor slander chaste women.

"He ordered us to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with him, to uphold Salat, to give Zakat and fast in the month of Ramadan.

"We believed in him and what he brought to us from Allah and we follow him in what he has asked us to do and we keep away from what he forbade us from doing.

"Thereupon, O King, our people attacked us, visited the severest punishment on us to make us renounce our religion and take us back to the old immorality and the worship of idols.

"They oppressed us, made life intolerable for us and obstructed us from observing our religion. So we left for your country, choosing you before anyone else, desiring your protection and hoping to live in Justice and in peace m your midst."

The Negus was impressed and was eager to hear more. He asked Jafar: "Do you have with you something of what your

Prophet brought concerning God?" "Yes," replied Jafar.

"Then read it to me," requested the Negus. Jafar, in his rich, melodious voice recited for him the first portion of Surah Maryam which deals with the story of Jesus and his mother Mary.

On hearing the words of the Quran, the Negus was moved to tears. To the Muslims, he said: "The message of your Prophet and that of Jesus came from the same source..." To Amr and his companion, he said:" Go. For, by God, I will never surrender them to you." That, however, was not the end of the matter. The wily Amr made up his mind to go to the King the following day "to mention something about the Muslims belief which will certainly fill his heart with anger and make him detest them" On the morrow, Amr went to the Negus and said:

"O King. these people to whom you have given refuge and whom you protect say something terrible about Jesus the son of Mary (that he is a slave). Send for them and ask them what they say about him."

The Negus summoned the Muslims once more and Jafar acted as their spokesman. The Negus put the question: "What do you say about Jesus, the son of Mary?"

"Regarding him, we only say what has been revealed to our Prophet ," replied Jaffar. "And what is that?" enquired the Negus.

"Our Prophet says that Jesus is the servant of God and His Prophet. His spirit and His word which He cast into Mary the Virgin."

The Negus was obviously excited by this reply and exclaimed: "By God, Jesus the son of Mary was

exactly as your Prophet has described him"

The bishops around the Negus grunted in disgust at what they had heard and were reprimanded by the Negus. He turned to the Muslims and said:

"Go, for you are safe and secure. Whoever obstructs you will pay for it and whoever opposes you will be punished. For, by God, I would rather not have a mountain of gold than that anyone of you should come to any harm."

Turning to Amr and his companion, he instructed his attendants: "Return their gifts to these two men. I have no need of them." Amr and his companion left broken and frustrated. The Muslims stayed on in the land of the Negus who proved to be most generous and kind to his guests.

Jafar and his wife Asma spent about ten years in Abyssinia which became a second home for them. There, Asma gave birth to three children whom they named Abdullah, Muhammad and Awn. Their second child was possibly the first child in the history of the Muslim Ummah to be given the name Muhammad after the noble Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace.

In the seventh year of the hijrah, Jafar and his family left Abyssinia with a group of Muslims and headed for Madinah. When they arrived the Prophet was just returning from the successful conquest of Khaybar. He was so overjoyed at meeting Jafar that he said: "I do not know what fills me with more happiness, the conquest of Khaybar or the coming of Jafar."

Muslims in general and the poor among them especially were just as happy with the return of Jafar as the Prophet was. Jafar quickly became known as a person who was much concerned for the welfare of the poor and indigent. For this he was nicknamed, the "Father of the Poor". Abu Hurayrah said of him: "The best of men towards us indigent folk was Jafar ibn Abi Talib. He would pass by us on his way home and give us whatever food he had. Even if his own food had run out, he would send us a pot in which he had placed some butterfat and nothing more. We would open it and lick it clean..."

Jafar's stay in Madinah was not long. At the beginning of the eighth year of the hijrah, the Prophet mobilized an army to confront Byzantine forces in Syria because one of his emissaries who had gone in peace had been treacherously killed by a Byzantine governor. He appointed Zayd ibn Harithah as commander of the army and gave the following instructions: "If Zayd is wounded or killed, Jafar ibn Abi Talib would take over the command. If Jafar is killed or wounded, then your commander would be Abdullah ibn Rawahah. If Abdullah ibn Rawahah is killed, then let the Muslims choose for themselves a commander."

The Prophet had never given such instructions to an army before and the Muslims took this as an indication that he expected the battle to be tough and that they would even suffer major losses.

When the Muslim army reached Mutah, a small village situated among hills in Jordan, they discovered that the Byzantines had amassed a hundred thousand men backed up by a massive number of Christian Arabs from the tribes of Lakhm, Judham, Qudaah and others. The Muslim army only numbered three thousand.

Despite the great odds against them, the Muslim forces engaged the Byzantines in battle. Zayd ibn al-Harithah, the beloved companion of the Prophet, was among the first to fall. Jafar ibn Abi Talib then assumed command. Mounted on his ruddy-complexioned horse, he penetrated deep into the Byzantine ranks. As he spurred his horse on, he called out: "How wonderful is Paradise as it draws near! How

pleasant and cool is its drink! Punishment for the Byzantines is not far away!" Jafar continued to fight vigorously but was eventually slain. The third in command, Abdullah ibn Rawahah, also fell. Khalid ibn al-Walid, the inveterate fighter who had recently accepted Islam, was then chosen as the commander. He made a tactical withdrawal, redeployed the Muslims and renewed the attack from several directions. Eventually, the bulk of the Byzantine forces fled in disarray.

The news of the death of his three commanders reached the Prophet in Madinah. The pain and grief he felt was intense. He went to Jafar's house and met his wife Asma. She was getting ready to receive her absent husband. She had prepared dough and bathed and clothed the children. Asma said: "When the Messenger of God approached us, I saw a veil of sadness shrouding his noble face and I became very apprehensive. But I did not dare ask him about Jafar for fear that I would hear some unpleasant news. He greeted and asked, 'Where are Jaffar's children?' I called them for him and they came and crowded around him happily, each one wanting to claim him for himself. He leaned over and hugged them while tears flowed from his eyes.

'O Messenger of God,' I asked, 'why do you cry? Have you heard anything about Jafar and his two companions?'

'Yes,' he replied. 'They have attained martyrdom.' The smiles and the laughter vanished from the faces of the little children when they heard their mother crying and wailing. Women came and gathered around Asma.

"O Asma," said the Prophet, "don't say anything objectionable and don't beat your breast." He then prayed to God to protect and sustain the family of Jafar and assured them that he had attained Paradise.

The Prophet left Asma's house and went to his daughter Fatimah who was also weeping. To her, he said: "For such as Jafar, you can (easily) cry yourself to death. Prepare food for Jafar's family for today they are beside themselves with grief."

Julaybib

From Alim® Online

His name was unusual and incomplete. Julaybib means "small grown" being the diminutive form of the word "Jalbab ". The name is an indication that Julaybib was small and short, even of dwarf-like stature. More than that, he is described as being "damim" which means ugly, deformed, or of repulsive appearance.

Even more disturbing, for the society in which he lived, Julaybib's lineage was not known. There is no record of who his mother or his father was or to what tribe he belonged. This was a grave disability in the society in which he lived. Julaybib could not expect any compassion or help, any protection or support from a society that placed a great deal of importance on family and tribal connections. In this regard, all that was known of him was that he was an Arab and that, as far as the new community of Islam was concerned, he was one of the Ansar. Perhaps he belonged to one of the outlying tribes beyond Madinah and had drifted into the city or he could even have been from among the Ansar of the city itself.

The disabilities under which Julaybib lived would have been enough to have him ridiculed and shunned in any society and in fact he was prohibited by one person, a certain Abu Barzah of the Aslam tribe, from entering his home. He once told his wife:

"Do not let Julaybib enter among you. If he does, I shall certainly do (something terrible to him)." Probably because he was teased and scoffed at in the company of men, Julaybib used to take refuge in the company of women.

Was there any hope of Julaybib being treated with respect and consideration? Was there any hope of his finding emotional satisfaction as an individual and as a man? Was there any hope of his enjoying the relationships which others take for granted? And in the new society emerging under the guidance of the Prophet, was he so insignificant as to be overlooked in the preoccupation with the great affairs of state and in the supreme issues of life and survival which constantly engaged the attention of the Prop het?

Just as he was aware of the great issues of life and destiny, the Prophet of Mercy was also aware of the needs and sensibilities of his most humble companions. With Julaybib in mind, the Prophet went to one of the Ansar and said: "I want to have your daug hter married." "How wonderful and blessed, O Messenger of God and what a delight to the eye (this would be)," replied the Ansari man with obvious joy and happiness. "I do not want her for myself," added the Prophet. "Then for whom, O Messenger of God?" as ked the man, obviously somewhat let down. "For Julaybib," said the Prophet.

The Ansari must have been too shocked to give his own reaction and he merely said: "I will consult with her mother." And off he went to his wife. "The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, wants to have your daughter married," he said t o her. She too was thrilled. "What a wonderful idea and what a delight to the eye (this would be)." she said. "He doesn't want to marry her himself but he wants to marry her to Julaybib," he added. She was flabbergasted.

"To Julaybib! No, never to Julaybib! No, by the living God, we shall not marry (her) to him." she

protested.

As the Ansari was about to return to the Prophet to inform him of what his wife had said, the daughter who had heard her mother's protestations, asked: "Who has asked you to marry me?"

Her mother told her of the Prophet's request for her hand in marriage to Julaybib. When she heard that the request had come from the Prophet and that her mother was absolutely opposed to the idea, she was greatly perturbed and said:

"Do you refuse the request of the Messenger of God? Send me to him for he shall certainly not bring ruin to me." This was the reply of a truly great person who had a clear understanding of what was required of her as a Muslim. What greater satisfaction an d fulfillment can a Muslim find than in responding willingly to the requests and commands of the Messenger of God! No doubt, this companion of the Prophet, whose name we do not even know had heard the verse of the Quran: "Now whenever God and His Apostle have decided a matter, it is not for a believing man or believing woman to claim freedom of choice in so far as they themselves are concerned. And he who disobeys God and His Prophet has already, most obviously, gone astray." (The Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, 33:36).

This verse was revealed in connection with the marriage of Zaynab bint Jahsh and Zayd ibn al-Harithah which was arranged by the Prophet to show the egalitarian spirit of Islam. Zaynab at first was highly offended at the thought of marrying Zayd a former s lave and refused to do so. The Prophet prevailed upon them both and they were married. The marriage however ended in divorce and Zaynab was eventually married to the Prophet himself. It is said that the Ansari girl read the verse to her parents and said :

"I am satisfied and submit myself to whatever the Messenger of God deems good for me." The Prophet heard of her reaction and prayed for her: "O Lord, bestow good on her in abundance and make not her life one of toil and trouble."

Among the Ansar, it is said there was not a more eligible bride than she. She was married by the Prophet to Julaybib and they lived together until he was killed.

And how was Julaybib killed? He went on an expedition with the Prophet, peace be on him, and an encounter with some mushrikin ensued. When the battle was over, the Prophet asked his companions: "Have you lost anyone?" They replied giving the names of thei r relatives of close friends who were killed. He put the same questions to other companions and they also named the ones they had lost in the battle. Another group answered that they had lost no close relative whereupon the Prophet said:

"But I have lost Julaybib. Search for him in the battlefield." They searched and found him beside seven mushrikin whom he had struck before meeting his end. The Prophet stood up and went to the spot where Julaybib, his short and deformed companion, lay. He stood over him and said: "He killed seven and then was killed? This (man) is of me and I am of him."

He repeated this two or three times. The Prophet then took him in his arms and it is said that he had no better bed besides the forearms of the messenger of God. The Prophet then dug for him a grave and himself placed him in it. He did not wash him for martyrs are not washed before burial.

Julaybib and his wife are not usually among the companions of the Prophet whose deeds are sung and whose exploits are recounted with reverence and admiration as they should be. But in the meagre facts that are known about them and which have here been re counted we see how humble human beings were

given hope and dignity by the Prophet where once there was only despair and self-debasement.

The attitude of the unknown and unnamed Ansari girl who readily agreed to be the wife of a physically unattractive man was an attitude which reflected a profound understanding of Islam. It reflected on her part the effacement of personal desires and prefe rences even when she could have counted on the support of her parents. It reflected on her part a total disregard for social pressures. It reflected above all a ready and implicit confidence in the wisdom and authority of the Prophet in submitting herse lf to whatever he deemed good. This is the attitude of the true believer.

In Julaybib, there is the example of a person who was almost regarded as a social outcast because of his appearance. Given help, confidence and encouragement by the noble Prophet, he was able to perform acts of courage and make the supreme sacrifice and d eserve the commendation of the Prophet: "He is of me and I am of him."

From Alim® Online

Khabbab Ibn Al-Aratt

Scanned from Companions of The Prophet, Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid

A woman named Umm Anmaar who belonged to the Khuza'a tribe in Makkah went to the slave market in the city. She wanted to buy herself a youth for her domestic chores and to exploit his labour for economic gains. As she scrutinized the faces of those who were displayed for sale, her eyes fell on a boy who was obviously not yet in his teens. She saw that he was strong and healthy and that there were clear signs of intelligence on his face. She needed no further incentive to purchase him. She paid and walked away with her new acquisition.

On the way home, Umm Anmaar turned to the boy and said:

"What's your name, boy?"

"Khabbab."

"And what's your father's name?"

"Al-Aratt."

"Where do you come from?"

"From Najd."

"Then you are an Arab!"

"Yes, from the Banu Tamim."

"How then did you come into the hands of the slave dealers in Makkah?"

"One of the Arab tribes raided our territory. They took our cattle and captured women and children. I was among the youths captured. I passed from one hand to another until I ended up in Makkah . . ."

Umm Anmaar placed the youth as an apprentice to one of the blacksmiths in Makkah to learn the art of making swords. The youth learnt quickly and was soon an expert at the profession. When he was strong enough, Umm Anmaar set up a workshop for him with all the necessary tools and equipment for making swords. Before long he was quite famous in Makkah for his excellent craftsmanship. People also liked dealing with him because of his honesty and integrity. Umm Anmaar gained much profit through him and exploited his talents to the full.

In spite of his youthfulness, Khabbab displayed unique intelligence and wisdom. Often, when he had finished work and was left to himself, he would reflect deeply on the state of Arabian society which was so steeped in corruption. He was appalled at the aimless wandering, the ignorance and the tyranny which he saw. He was one of the victims of this tyranny and he would say to himself:

"After this night of darkness, there must be a dawn." And he hoped that he would live long enough to see the darkness dissipate with the steady glow and brightness of new light.

Khabbab did not have to wait long. He was privileged to be in Makkah when the first rays of the light of Islam penetrated the city. It emanated from the lips of Muhammad ibn Abdullah as he announced that none deserves to be worshipped or adored except the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He called for an end to injustice and oppression and sharply criticised the practices of the rich in accumulating wealth at the expense of the poor and the outcast. He denounced aristocratic privileges and attitudes and called for a new order based on respect for human dignity and compassion for the underprivileged including orphans, wayfarers and the needy.

To Khabbab, the teachings of Muhammad were like a powerful light dispelling the darkness of ignorance. He went and listened to these teachings directly from him. Without any hesitation he stretched out his hand to the Prophet in allegiance and testified that "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and His messenger." He was among the first ten persons to accept Islam.

Khabbab did not hide his acceptance of Islam from anyone. When the news of his becoming a Muslim reached Umm Anmaar, she became incensed with anger. She went to her brother Siba'a ibn Abd al-Uzza who gathered a gang of youths from the Khuza'a tribe and together they made their way to Khabbab. They found him completely engrossed in his work. Siba'a went up to him and said:

"We have heard some news from you which we don't believe."

"What is it?" asked Khabbab.

"We have been told that you have given up your religion and that you now follow that man from the Banu Hashim ."

"I have not given up my religion," replied Khabbab calmly. "I only believe in One God Who has no partner. I reject your idols and I believe that Muhammad is the servant of God and His messenger."

No sooner had Khabbab spoken these words than Siba'a and his gang set upon him. They beat him with their fists and with iron bars and they kicked him until he fell unconscious to the ground, with blood streaming from the wounds he received.

The news of what happened between Khabbab and his slave mistress spread throughout Makkah like wild-fire. People were astonished at Khabbab's daring. They had not yet heard of anyone who followed Muhammad and who had had the audacity to announce the fact with such frankness and defiant confidence.

The Khabbab affair shook the leaders of the Quraysh. They did not expect that a blacksmith, such as belonged to Umm Anmaar and who had no clan in Makkah to protect him and no asabEyyah to prevent him from injury, would be bold enough to go outside her authority, denounce her gods and reject the religion of her forefathers. They realized that this was only the beginning . . .

The Quraysh were not wrong in their expectations. Khabbab's courage impressed many of his friends and encouraged them to announce their acceptance of Islam. One after another, they began to proclaim publicly the message of truth.

In the precincts of the Haram, near the Ka'bah, the Quraysh leaders gathered to discuss the problem of

Muhammad. Among them were Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, al- Walid ibn al-Mughira and Abu Jahl ibn Hisham. They noted that Muhammad was getting stronger and that hi sfollowing was increasing day by day, indeed hour by hour. To them this was like a terrible disease and they made up their minds to stop it before it got out of control. They decided that each tribe should get hold of any follower of Muhammad among them and punish him until he either recants his faith or dies.

On Siba'a ibn Abd al-Uzza and his people fell the task of punishing Khabbab even further. Regularly they began taking him to an open area in the city when the sun was at its zenith and the ground was scorching hot. They would take off his clothes and dress him in iron armour and lay him on the ground. In the intense heat his skin would be seared and his body would become inert. When it appeared that all strength had left him, they would come up and challenge him:

"What do you say about Muhammad?"

"He is the servant of God and His messenger. He has come with the religion of guidance and truth, to lead us from darkness into light."

They would become more furious and intensify their beating. They would ask about al-Laat and al-Uzza and he would reply firmly:

"Two idols, deaf and dumb, that cannot cause harm or bring any benefit..."

This enraged them even more and they would take a big hot stone and place it on his back. Khabbab's pain and anguish would be excruciating but he did not recant.

The inhumanity of Umm Anmaar towards Khabbab was not less than that of her brother. Once she saw the Prophet speaking to Khabbab at his workshop and she flew into a blind rage. Every day after that, for several days, she went to Khabbab's workshop and punished him by placing a red hot iron from the furnace on his head. The agony was unbearable and he often fainted.

Khabbab suffered long and his only recourse was to prayer. He prayed for the punishment of Umm Anmaar and her brother. His release from pain and suffering only came when the Prophet, peace be upon him, gave permission to his companions to emigrate to Madinah. Umm Anmaar by then could not prevent him from going. She herself became afflicted with a tertible illness which no one had heard of before. She behaved as if she had suffered a rabid attack. The headaches she had were especially nerve-racking. Her children sought everywhere for medical help until finally they were told that the only cure was to cauterize her head. This was done. The treatment, with a ret hot iron, was more terrible than all the headaches she suffered.

At Madinah, among the generous and hospitable Ansar, Khabbab experienced a state of ease and restfulness which he had not known for a long time. He was delighted to be near the Prophet, peace be upon him, with no one to molest him or disturb his happiness.

He fought alongside the noble Prophet at the battle of Badr. He participated in the battle of Uhud where he had the satisfaction of seeing Siba'a ibn Abd al-Uzza meet his end at the hands of Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet.

Khabbab lived long enough to witness the great expansiOn of Islam under the four Khulafaa ar-RashidunÑAbu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. He once visited Umar during his caliphate. Umar stood upÑhe was in a meetingÑand greeted Khabbab with the words:

"No one is more deserving than you to be in this assembly other than Bilal."

He asked Khabbab about the torture and the persecution he had received at the hands of the mushrikeen. Khabbab described this in some detail since it was still very vivid in his mind. He then exposed his back and even Umar was aghast at what he saw.

In the last phase of his life, Khabbab was blessed with wealth such as he had never before dreamed of. He was, however, well-known for his generosity. It is even said that he placed his dirhams and his dinars in a part of his house that was known to the poor and the needy. He did not secure this money in any way and those in need would come and take what they needed without seeking any permission or asking any questions.

In spite of this, he was always afraid of his accountability to God for the way he disposed of this wealth. A group of companions related that they visited Khabbab when he was sick and he said:

"In this place there are eighty thousand dirhams. By God, I have never secured it any way and I have not barred anyone in need from it."

He wept and they asked why he was weeping.

"I weep," he said, "because my companions have passed away and they did not obtain any such reward in this world. I have lived on and have acquired this wealth and I fear that this will be the only reward for my deeds."

Soon after he passed away. The Khalifah Ali ibn abi Talib, may God be pleased with him, stood at his grave and said:

"May God have mercy on Khabbab. He accepted Islam wholeheartedly. He performed hijrah willingly. He lived as a mujahid and God shall not withhold the reward of one who has done good."

Scanned from "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Muadh Ibn Jabal

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Muadh ibn Jabal was a young man growing up in Yathrib as the light of guidance and truth began to spread over the Arabian peninsula. He was a handsome and Imposing character with black eyes and curly hair and immediately impressed whoever he met. He was already distinguished for the sharpness of his intelligence among young men of his own age.

The young Muadh became a Muslim at the hands of Musiab ibn Umayr, the da'iy (missionary) whom the Prophet had sent to Yathrib before the hijrah. Muadh was among the seventy-two Yathribites who journeyed to Makkah, one year before the hijrah, and met the Prophet at his house and later again in the valley of Mina, outside Makkah, at Aqabah. Here the famous second Aqabah Pledge was made at which the new Muslims of Yathrib, including some women, vowed to support and defend the Prophet at any cost. Muadh was among those who enthusiastically clasped the hands of the blessed Prophet then and pledged allegiance to him.

As soon as Muadh returned to Madinah from Makkah, he and a few others of his age formed a group to remove and destroy idols from the houses of the mushrikeen in Yathrib. One of the effects of this campaign was that a prominent man of the city, Amr ibn al-Jumuh, became a Muslim .

When the noble Prophet reached Madinah, Muadh ibn Jabal stayed in his company as much as possible. He studied the Qur'an and the laws of Tslam until he became one of the most well-versed of all the companions in the religion of Islam.

Wherever Muadh went, people would refer to him for legal judgements on matters over which they differed. This is not strange since he was brought up in the school of the Prophet himself and learnt as much as he could from him. He was the best pupil of the best teacher. His knowledge bore the stamp of authenticity. The best certificate that he could have received came from the Prophet himself when he said:

"The most knowledgeable of my ummah in matters of halal and haram is Muadh ibn Jabal."

One of the greatest of Muadh's contributions to the ummah of Muhammad was that he was one of the group of six who collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Whenever a group of companions met and Muadh was among them, they would look at him with awe and respect on account of his knowledge. The Prophet and his two Khalifahs after him placed this unique gift and power in the service of Islam.

After the liberation of Makkah, the Quraysh became Muslims en masse. The Prophet immediately saw the need of the new Muslims for teachers to instruct them in the fundamentals of Islam and to make them truly understand the spirit and letter of its laws. He appointed Attab ibn Usay as his deputy in Makkah and he asked Muadh ibn Jabal to stay with him and teach people the Qur'an and instruct them in the religion.

Sometime after the Prophet had returned to Madinah, messengers of the kings of Yemen came to him

announcing that they and the people of Yemen had become Muslims. They requested that some teachers should be with them to teach Islam to the people. For this task the Prophet commissioned a group of competent du'at (missionaries) and made Muadh ibn Jabal their amir. He then put the following question to Muadh:

"According to what will you judge?"

"According to the Book of God," replied Muadh.

"And if you find nothing therein?"

"According to the Sunnah of the Prophet of God."

"And if you find nothing therein?"

"Then I will exert myself (exercise ijtEhad) to form n own judgement." The Prophet was pleased with this reply and said:

"Praise be to God Who has guided the messenger of the Prophet to that which pleases the Prophet."

The Prophet personally bade farewell to this mission of guidance and light and walked for some distance alongside Muadh as he rode out of the city. Finally he said to him:

"O Muadh, perhaps you shall not meet me again after this year. Perhaps when you return you shall see only my mosque and my grave."

Muadh wept. Those with him wept too. A feeling of sadness and desolation overtook him as he parted from his beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him.

The Prophet's premonition was correct. The eyes of Muadh never beheld the Prophet after that moment. The Prophet died before Muadh returned from the Yemen. There is no doubt that Muadh wept when he returned to Madinah and found there was no longer the blessed company of the Prophet.

During the caliphate of Umar, Muadh was sent to the Banu Kilab to apportion their stipends and to distribute the sadaqah of their richer folk among the poor. When he had done his duty, he returned to his wife with his saddle blanket around his neck, empty handed, and she asked him:

"Where are the gifts which commissioners return with for their families?"

"I had an alert Supervisor who was checking over me," he replied.

"You were a trusted person with the messenger of God and with Abu Bakr. Then Umar came and he sent a supervisor with you to check on you!" she exclaimed. She went on to talk about this to the women of Umar's household and complained to them about it. The complaint eventually reached Umar, so he summoned Muadh and said:

"Did I send a supervisor with you to check on you?"

"No, Amir al-Mu'mineen," he said, "But that was the only reason I could find to give her." Umar laughed and then gave him a gift, saying,

"I hope this pleases you."

Also during the caliphate of Umar, the governor of Syria, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan sent a message saying:

"O Amir al-Mu'mineen! The people of Syria are many. They fill the towns. They need people to teach them the Qur'an and instruct them in the religion."

Umar thereupon summoned five persons who had collected the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him. They were Muadh ibn Jabal, 'Ubadah ibn asSamit, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Abu adDardaa. He said to them:

"Your brothers in Syria have asked me to help them by sending those who can teach them the Qur'an and instruct them in the religion. Please appoint three among you for this task and may God bless you. I can select three of you myself if you do not want to put the matter to the vote."

"Why should we vote?" they asked. "Abu Ayyub is quite old and Ubayy is a sick man. That leaves three of us."

"All three of you go to Homs first of all. If you are satisfied with the condition of the people there, one of you should stay there, another should go to Damascus and the other to Palestine."

So it was that 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit was left at Homs, Abu ad-Dardaa went to Damascus and Muadh went to Palestine. There Muadh fell ill with an infectious disease. As he was near to death, he turned in the direction of the Ka'bah and repeated this refrain:

"Welcome Death, Welcome. A visitor has come after a long absence . . ."

And looking up to heaven, he said:

"O Lord, You know that I did not desire the world and to prolong my stay in it . . . O Lord, accept my soul with goodness as you would accept a believing soul . . ."

He then passed away, far from his family and his clan, a da'iy in the service of God and a muhajEr in His path.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Muhammad Ibn Maslamah

Black, tall and sturdy, Muhammad ibn Maslamah towered above his contemporaries. He was a giant among the companions of the Prophet, a giant in body and a giant in deeds.

Significantly he was called Muhammad even before he became a Muslim. It would seem that his name was itself a pointer to the fact that he was among the first of the Yathribites to become a Muslim and to follow the teachings of the great Prophet. (The name Muhammad was practically unknown at the time but since the Prophet encouraged Muslims to name themselves after him, it has become one of the most widely used names in the world.)

Muhammad ibn Maslamah was a halif or an ally of the Aws tribe in Madinah indicating that he himself was not an Arab. He became a Muslim at the hands of Musab ibn Umayr, the first missionary sent out by the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah. He accepted Islam even before men like Usayd ibn Hudayr and Sad ibn Muadh who were influential men in the city.

When the Prophet, peace be on him, came to Madinah, he adopted the unique method of strengthening the bonds of brotherhood between the Muhajirin and the Ansar. He paired off each Muhajir with one of the Ansar. This arrangement also helped to relieve the i mmediate needs of the Muhajirin for shelter and food and created an integrated community of believers.

The Prophet was a keen observer of character and temperament and was concerned to join in brotherhood persons of similar attitudes and tastes. He joined in brotherhood Muhammad ibn Maslamah and Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah. Like Abu Ubaydah, Muhammad ib n Maslamah was quiet and pensive and had a strong sense of trust and devotion. He was also brave and resolute in action. He was a distinguished horseman who performed feats of heroism and sacrifice in the service of Islam.

Muhammad ibn Maslamah took part in all the military engagements of the Prophet except the expedition to Tabuk. On that occasion, he and Ali were put in charge of an army which was left behind to protect Madinah. Later in life, he would often relate scenes of these battles to his ten children.

There are many instances in the life of Muhammad ibn Maslamah which showed what a dependable and trustworthy person he was. Before the start of hostilities at the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet and the Muslim force numbering some seven hundred persons spent a night in an open camp. He put fifty men under the command of Muhammad ibn Maslamah and entrusted him with the task of patrolling the camp the whole night. During the battle itself, after the disastrous rout of the Muslims by the Quraysh during which abo ut seventy Muslims lost their lives and many fled in every possible direction, a small band of the faithful bravely defended the Prophet till the tide of battle turned. Muhammad ibn Maslamah was among them.

Muhammad ibn Maslamah was quick to respond to the call of action. He once stood listening to the Prophet as he spoke to the Muslims about the designs of some of the Jewish leaders in the region.

At the beginning of his stay in Madinah, the Prophet had concluded an agreement with the Jews of the city which said in part:

"The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and harassment. They shall have equal rights as our own people to our assistance...They shall join the Muslims in defending Madinah against all enemies...They shall no t declare war nor enter in treaty or agreement against the Muslims."

Jewish leaders had violated this agreement by encouraging the Quraysh and tribes around Madinah in their designs against the state. They were also bent on creating. discord among the people of Madinah in order to weaken the influence of Islam.

After the resounding victory of the Muslims over the Quraysh at the Battle of Badr, one of the three main Jewish groups in Madinah, the Banu Qaynuqa was especially furious and issued a petulant challenge to the Prophet. They said:

"O Muhammad! You really think that we are like your people (the Quraysh)? Don't be deceived. You confronted a people who have no knowledge of war and you took the chance to rout them. If you were to fight against us you would indeed know that we arc men."

They thus spurned their agreement with the Prophet and issued an open challenge to fight. The Qaynuqa however were goldsmiths who dominated the market in Madinah. They were depending on their allies, the Khazraj, to help them in their declared war. The Kh azraj refused. The Prophet placed the Banu Qaynuqa's quarters under a siege which lasted for fifteen nights. The fainthearted Qaynuqa finally decided to surrender and ask the Prophet for a free passage out of Madinah.

The Prophet allowed them to leave and the tribe - men, women and children - left unharmed. They had to leave behind them their arms and their goldsmith's equipment. They settled down at Adhraat in Syria.

The departure of the Qaynuqa did not end Jewish feelings of animosity towards the Prophet although the nonaggression agreement was still in force. One of those who was consumed with hatred against the Prophet and the Muslims and who openly gave vent to hi s rage was Kab ibn al-Ashraf.

Kab's father was in fact an Arab who had fled to Madinah after committing a crime. He became an ally of the Banu Nadir, another important Jewish group, and married a Jewish lady name Aqilah bint Abu-l Haqiq. She was Kab's mother.

Kab was a tall and impressive looking person. He was a well-known poet and was one of the richest men among the Jews. He lived in a castle on the outskirts of Madinah where he had extensive palm groves. He was regarded as a Jewish leader of importance thr oughout the Hijaz. He provided means of support and sponsorship to many Jewish rabbis.

Kab was openly hostile to Islam. He lampooned the Prophet, besmirched in verse the reputation of Muslim women, and incited the tribes in and around Madinah against the Prophet and Islam. He was particularly distressed when he heard the news of the Muslim victory at Badr. When he saw the returning army with the Quraysh prisoners of war, he was bitter and furious. He took it upon himself then to make the long journey to Makkah to express his grief and to incite the Quraysh to take further revenge. He also w ent to other areas, from tribe to tribe, urging people to take up arms against the Prophet. News of his activities reached the Prophet, peace be on him, who prayed: "O Lord, rid me of the son of Ashfar, however You wish."

Kab had become a real danger to the state of peace and mutual trust which the Prophet was struggling to achieve in Madinah.

Kab returned to Madinah and continued his verbal attacks on the Prophet and his abuse of Muslim women. He refused, after warnings from the Prophet, to stop his dirty campaign and sinister intrigues. He was bent on fomenting a revolt against the Prophet an d the Muslims in Madinah. By all these actions, Kab had openly declared war against the Prophet. He was dangerous and a public enemy to the nascent Muslim state. The Prophet was quite exasperated with him and said to the Muslims: "Who will deal with Kab i bn al-Ashraf? He has offended God and His Apostle."

"I shall deal with him for you, O Messenger of God," volunteered Muhammad ibn Maslamah.

This, however, was no easy undertaking. Muhammad ibn Maslamah, according to one report, went home and stayed for three days without either eating or drinking, just thinking about what he had to do. The Prophet heard of this, called him and asked him why h e had not been eating or drinking. He replied: "O Messenger of God, I gave an undertaking to you but I do not know whether I can accomplish it or not." "Your duty is only to try your utmost," replied the Prophet.

Muhammad ibn Maslamah then went to some other companions of the Prophet and told them what he had undertaken to do. They included Abu Nailah, a foster brother of Kab ibn al-Ahsraf. They agreed to help him and he devised a plan to accomplish the mission. T hey went back to the Prophet to seek his approval since the plan involved enticing Kab from his fortress residence through some deception. The Prophet gave his consent on the principle that war involved deceit.

Both Muhammad ibn Maslamah who was in fact a nephew of Kab by fosterage and Abu Nailah then went to Kab's residence. Muhammad ibn Maslamah was the first to speak: "This man (meaning the Prophet, peace be on him) has asked us for sadaqah (charitable tax) a nd we cannot even find food to eat. He is oppressing us with his laws and prohibitions and I thought I could come to you to ask for a loan."

"By God, I am much more dissatisfied with him," confessed Kab. "We have followed him but we do not want to leave him until we see how this whole business will end. We would like you to lend us a wasaq or two of gold," continued Muhammad ibn Maslamah.

"Isn't it about time that you realize what falsehood you are tolerating from him? asked Kab as he promised to give them the loan. "However," he said, "you must provide security (for the loan)."

"What security do you want?" they asked. "Give me your wives as security," he suggested. "How can we give you our wives as security ," they protested, "when you are the most handsome of Arabs?"

"Then give me your children as security," Kab suggested. "How can we give you our children as security when any one of them would thereafter be ridiculed by being called a hostage for one or two wasaqs of gold. This would be a disgrace to us. But we could give you our (means of) protection (meaning weapons) since you know that we need them."

Kab agreed to this suggestion which they had made to disabuse his mind of any notion that they had come armed. They promised to come back to him again to bring the weapons.

Meanwhile, Abu Nailah also came up to Kab and said: "Woe to you, Ibn Ashraf. I have come to you intending to mention something to you and you do not encourage me." Kab asked him to go on and Abu Nailah said: "The coming of this man to us has been a source of affliction to our Arab customs. With one shot he has severed our ways and left families hungry and in difficulties. We and our families are struggling." Kab replied: "I, Ibn al-Ashraf, by God, I had told you, son of Salamah, that the matter would end up as I predicted." Abu Nailah replied: "I wish you could sell us some food and we would

give you whatever form of security and trust required. Be good to us. I have friends who share my views on this and I want to bring them to you so that you could sell them some food and deal well towards them. We will come to you and pledge our shields and weapons to you as security." "There is loyalty and good faith in weapons," agreed Kab.

With this they left promising to return and bring the required security for the loan. They went back to the Prophet and reported to him what had happened. That night, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, Abu Nailah, Abbad ibn Bisnr, Al-Harith ibn Aws and Abu Abasah ibn Jabr all set off for Kabs house. The Prophet went with them for a short distance and parted with the words:

"Go forth in the name of God." And he prayed: "O Lord, help them." The Prophet returned home. It was a moonlit night in the month of Rabi al-Awwal in the third year of the hijrah.

Muhammad ibn Maslamah and the four with him reached Kab's house. They called out to him. As he got out of bed, his wife held him and warned: "You are a man at war. People at war do not go down at such an hour." "It is only my nephew Muhammad ibn Maslamah and my foster brother, Abu Nailah..." Kab came down with his sword drawn. He was heavily scented with the perfume of musk.

"I have not smelt such a pleasant scent as today," greeted Muhammad ibn Maslamah. "Let me smell your head." Kab agreed and as Muhammad bent over, he grasped Kab's head firmly and called on the others to strike down the enemy of God.

(Details of this incident vary somewhat. Some reports state that it was Abu Nailah who gave the command to strike down Kab and this was done after Kab had emerged from his house and walked with them for some time.)

The elimination of Kab ibn al-Ashraf struck terror into the hearts of those, and there were many of them in Madinah, who plotted and intrigued against the Prophet. Such open hostility as Kab's diminished for a time but certainly did not cease.

At the beginning of the fourth year of the hijrah, the Prophet went to the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir on the outskirts of Madinah to seek their help on a certain matter. While among them, he found out that they were planning to kill him then and there. He had to take decisive action. The Banu Nadir had gone too far. Straight away, the Prophet went back to the center of the city. He summoned Muhammad ibn Maslamah and sent him to inform the Banu Nadir that they had to leave Madinah within ten days because o f their treacherous behavior and that any one of them seen after that in the city would forfeit his life.

One can just imagine Muhammad ibn Maslamah addressing the Banu Nadir. His towering stature and his loud and clear voice combined to let the Banu Nadir know that the Prophet meant every word he said and that they had to stand the consequences of their trea cherous acts. The fact that the Prophet chose Muhammad ibn Maslamah for the task is a tribute to his loyalty, courage and firmness.

Further details of the expulsion of the Banu Nadir from Madinah do not concern us here: their plan to resist the Prophet with outside help; the Prophet's siege of their district and their eventual surrender and evacuation mainly to Khaybar in the north. T wo of the Banu Nadir though became MusIims - Yamin ibn Umayr and Abu Sad ibn Wahb. Ali this happened exactly one year after the elimination of Kab ibn al-Ashraf.

Both during the time of the Prophet and after, Muhammad ibn Maslamah was known for carrying out

any assignment he accepted exactly as he was ordered, neither doing more nor less than he was asked to do. It was these qualities which made Umar choose him as one of his ministers and as a trusted friend and guide.

When Amr ibn al-Aas requested reinforcements during his expedition to Egypt, Umar sent him four detachments of one thousand men each. Leading these detachments were Muhammad ibn Maslamah, az-Zubayr ibn aI-Awwam, Ubadah ibn as-Samit and al-Miqdad ibn al-As wad. To Amr, Umar sent a message saying, "Let me remind you that I am sending Muhammad ibn Maslamah to you to help you distribute your wealth. Accommodate him and forgive any harshness of his towards you."

Ibn Maslamah went to Amr in Fustat (near present-day Cairo).. He sat at his table but did not touch the food. Amr asked him: "Did Umar prevent you from tasting my food?" "No," replied ibn Maslamah, "he did not prevent me from having your food but neither did he command me to eat of it." He then placed a flat loaf of bread on the table and ate it with salt. Amr became upset and said: "May God bring to an end the time in which we work for Umar ibn al-Khattab! I have witnessed a time when al-Khattab and his son Umar were wandering around wearing clothes which could not even cover them properly while Al-Aas ibn Wail (Amr's father) sported brocade lined with gold..."

"As for your father and the father of Umar, they are in hell," retorted Muhammad ibn Maslamah, because they did not accept Islam. "As for you, if Umar did not give you an appointment, you would have been pleased with what you got from their udders," conti nued Ibn Maslamah obviously disabusing Amr's mind of any ideas he might have of appearing superior because he was the governor of Egypt.

"Assemblies must be conducted as a form of trust," said Amr in an attempt to diffuse the situation and Muhammad ibn Maslamah replied: "Oh yes, so long as Umar is alive." He wanted to impress upon people the justice of Umar and the egalitarian teachings of Islam. Muhammad ibn Maslamah was a veritable scourge against all arrogant and haughty behavior.

On another occasion and at another end of the Muslim state under his caliphate, Umar heard that the famous Sad ibn Abi Waqqas was building a palace at Kufa. Umar sent Muhammad ibn Maslamah to deal with the situation. On reaching Kufa, Muhammad promptly bu rnt the palace down. One does not know whether people were more surprised by the instructions of Umar or by the humiliation of Sad ibn Abi Waqqas, the famed fighter, conqueror at Qadisiyyah, and the one praised by the Prophet himself for his sacrifices at Uhud.

Sad did not say a word. This was all part of the great process of self-criticism and rectification which helped to make Islam spread and establish it on foundations of justice and piety.

Muhammad ibn Maslamah served Umar's successor, Uthman ibn Affan, faithfully. When, however, the latter was killed and civil war broke out among the Muslims, Muhammad ibn Maslamah did not participate. The sword which he always used and which was given to h im by the Prophet himself he deliberately broke. During the time of the Prophet, he was known as the "Knight of the Prophet". By refusing to use the sword against Muslims he preserved this reputation undiminished.

Subsequently, he made a sword from wood and fashioned it well. He placed it in a scabbard and hung it inside his house. When he was asked about it he said: "I simply hang it there to terrify people." Muhammad ibn Maslamah died in Madinah in the month of S afar in the year 46 AH. He was seventy seven years old.

Musab Ibn Umayr

From Alim® Online

Musab ibn Umayr was born and grew up in the lap of affluence and luxury. His rich parents lavished a great deal of care and attention on him. He wore the most expensive clothes and the most stylish shoes of his time. Yemeni shoes were then considered to be very elegant and it was his privilege to have the very best of these.

As a youth he was admired by the Quraysh not only for his good looks and style but for his intelligence. His elegant bearing and keen mind endeared him to the Makkan nobility among whom he moved with ease. Although still young, he had the privilege of attending Quraysh meetings and gatherings. He was thus in a position to know the issues which concerned the Makkans and what their attitudes and strategies were.

Among Makkans there was a sudden outburst of excitement and concern as Muhammad, known as al-Amin (the Trustworthy), emerged saying that God had sent him as a bearer of good tidings and as a warner. He warned the Quraysh of terrible chastisement if they did not turn to the worship and obedience of God and he spoke of Divine rewards for the righteous. The whole of Makkah buzzed with talk of these claims. The vulnerable Quraysh leaders thought of ways of silencing Muhammad. When ridicule and persuasion did not work, they embarked on a campaign of harassment and persecution.

Musab learnt that Muhammad and those who believed in his message were gathering in a house near the hill of as-Safa to evade Quraysh harassment. This was the house of al-Arqam. To satisfy his curiosity, Musab proceeded to the house undererred by the know ledge of Quraysh hostility. There he met the Prophet teaching his small band of companions, reciting the verses of the Quran to them and performing Salat with them in submission to God, the Great, the Most High.

The Prophet welcomed him, and with his noble hand tenderly touched Musab's heart as it throbbed with excitement. A deep feeling of tranquility came over him.

Musab was totally overwhelmed by what he had seen and heard. The words of the Quran had made a deep and immediate impression on him.

In this first meeting with the Prophet, the young and decisive Musab declared his acceptance of Islam. It was a historic moment. The keen mind of Musab, his tenacious will and determination, his eloquence and his beautiful character were now in the service of Islam and would help change the course of men's destinies and of history.

On accepting Islam Musab had one major concern his mother. Her name was Khunnas bint Malik. She was a woman of extraordinary power. She had a dominant personality and could easily arouse fear and terror. When Musab became a Muslim, the only power on earth he might have feared was his mother. All the powerful nobles of Makkah and their attachment to pagan customs and traditions were of little consequence to him. Having his mother as an opponent, however, could not be taken lightly.

Musab thought quickly. He decided that he should conceal his acceptance of Islam until such time as a solution should come from God. He continued to frequent the House of al-Arqam and sit in the company of the Prophet. He felt serene in his new faith and by keeping all indications of his acceptance of Islam away from her, he managed to stave off his mother's wrath, but not for long.

It was difficult during those days to k eep anything secret in Makkah for long. The eyes and ears of the Quraysh were on every road. Behind every footstep imprinted in the soft and burning sand was a Quraysh informer. Before long, Musab was seen as he quietly entered the House of al-Arqam, by someone called Uthman ibn Talhah.

At another time, Uthman saw Musab praying in the same manner as Muhammad prayed. The conclusion was obvious.

As winds in a storm, the devastating news of Musab's acceptance of Islam spread among the Quraysh and eventually reached his mother.

Musab stood before his mother, his clan and the Quraysh nobility who had all gathered to find out what he had done and what he had to say for himself.

With a certain humility and calm confidence, Musab acknowledged that he had become a Muslim and no doubt he explained his reasons for so doing. He then recited some verses of the Quran - verses which had cleansed the hearts of the believers and brought them back to the natural religion of God. Though only few in number, their hearts were now filled with wisdom, honor, justice and courage.

As Musab's mother listened to her son on whom she had lavished so much care and affection, she became increasingly incensed. She felt like silencing him with one terrible blow. But the hand which shot out like an arrow staggered and faltered before the light which radiated from Musab's serene face. Perhaps, it was her mother's love which restrained her from actually beating him, but still she felt she had to do something to avenge the gods which her son had forsaken. The solution she decided upon was far worse for Musab than a few blows could ever have been. She had Musab taken to a far corner of the house. There he was firmly bound and tethered. He had become a prisoner in his own home.

For a long time, Musab remained tied and confined under the watchful eyes of guards whom his mother had placed over him to prevent him from any further contact with Muhammad and his faith. Despite his ordeal, Musab did not waver. He must have had news of how other Muslims were being harassed and tortured by the idolators. For him, as for many other Muslims, life in Makkah was becoming more and more intolerable. Eventually he heard that a group of Muslims were preparing secretly to migrate to Abyssinia to seek refuge and relief. His immediate thoughts were how to escape from his prison and join them. At the first opportunity, when his mother and his warders were off-guard, he managed to slip away quietly. Then with utmost haste he joined the other refugee s and before long they sailed together across the Red Sea to Africa.

Although the Muslims enjoyed peace and security in the land of the Negus, they longed to be in Makkah in the company of the noble Prophet. So when a report reached Abyssinia that the conditions of the Muslims in Makkah had improved, Musab was among the fi rst to return to Makkah. The report was in fact false and Musab once again left for Abyssinia.

Whether he was in Makkah or Abyssinia, Musab remained strong in his new faith and his main concern was to make his life worthy of his Creator.

When Musab returned to Makkah again, his mother made a last attempt to gain control of him and threatened to have him tied up again and confined. Musab swore that if she were to do that, he would kill everyone who helped her. She knew very well that he would carry out this threat for she saw the iron determination he now had.

Separation was inevitable. When the moment came, it was sad for both mother and son but it revealed a strong Persistence in kufr on the part of the mother and an even greater persistence in iman on the part of the son. As she threw him out of her house and cut him off from all the material comforts she used to lavish on him, she said:

"Go to your own business. I am not prepared to be a mother to you." Musab went up close to her and said:

"Mother, I advise you sincerely. I am concerned about you. Do testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."

"I swear by the shooting stars, I shall not enter your religion even if my opinion is ridiculed and my mind becomes impotent," she insisted.

Musab thus left her home and the luxury and comforts he used to enjoy. The elegant, well-dressed youth would henceforth be seen only in the coursest of attire. He now had more important concerns. He was determined to use his talents and energies in acquiring knowledge and in serving God and His Prophet.

One day, several years later, Musab came upon a gathering of Muslims sitting around the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. They bowed their heads and lowered their gaze when they saw Musab, and some were even moved to tears. This was because his jalbab was old and in tatters and they were immediately taken back to the days before his acceptance of Islam when he was a model of sartorial elegance. The Prophet looked at Musab, smiled gracefully and said:

"I have seen this Musab with his parents in Makkah. They lavished care and attention on him and gave him all comforts. There was no Quraysh youth like him. Then he left all that seeking the pleasure of God and devoting himself to the service of His Prophet." The Prophet then went on to say:

"There will come a time when God will grant you victory over Persia and Byzantium. You would have one dress in the morning and another in the evening and you would eat out of one dish in the morning and another in the evening."

In other words, the Prophet predicted that the Muslims would become rich and powerful and that they would have material goods in plenty. The companions sitting around asked the Prophet:

"O Messenger of Allah, are we in a better situation in these times or would we be better off then?" He replied:

"You are rather better off now than you would be then. If you knew of the world what I know you would certainly not be so much concerned with it."

On another occasion, the Prophet talked in a similar vein to his companions and asked them how they would be if they could have one suit of clothes in the morning and another in the evening and even have enough material to put curtains in their houses just as the Kabah was fully covered. The companions replied that they would then be in a better situation because they would then have sufficient sustenance

and would be free for ibadah (worship). The Prophet however told them that they were indeed better o ff as they were.

After about ten years of inviting people to Islam, most of Makkah still remained hostile. The noble Prophet then went to Taif seeking new adherents to the faith. He was repulsed and chased out of the city. The future of Islam looked bleak.

It was just after this that the Prophet chose Musab to be his "ambassador" to Yathrib to teach a small group of believers who had come to pledge allegiance to Islam and prepare Madinah for the day of the great Hijrah.

Musab was chosen above companions who were older than he or were more closely related to the Prophet or who appeared to possess greater prestige. No doubt Musab was chosen for this task because of his noble character, his fine manners and his sharp intellect. His knowledge of the Quran and his ability to recite it beautifully and movingly was also an important consideration.

Musab understood his mission well. He knew that he was on a sacred mission. to invite people to God and the straight path of Islam and to prepare what was to be the territorial base for the young and struggling Muslim community.

He entered Madinah as a guest of Sad ibn Zurarah of the Khazraj tribe. Together they went to people, to their homes and their gatherings, telling them about the Prophet, explaining Islam to them and reciting the Quran. Through the grace of God, many accepted Islam. This was especially pleasing to Musab but profoundly alarming to many leaders of Yathribite society.

Once Musab and Sad were sitting near a well in an orchard of the Zafar clan. With them were a number of new Muslims and others who were interested in Islam. A powerful notable of the city, Usayd ibn Khudayr, came up brandishing a spear. He was livid with rage. Sad ibn Zararah saw him and told Musab:

"This is a chieftain of his people. May God place truth in his heart." "If he sits down, I will speak to him," replied Musab, displaying all the calm and tact of a great daiy.

The angry Usayd shouted abuse and threatened Musab and his host. "Why have you both come to us to corrupt the weak among us? Keep away from us if you want to stay alive." Musab smiled a warm and friendly smile and said to Usayd: "Won't you sit down and listen? If you are pleased and satisfied with our mission. accept it and if you dislike it we would stop telling you what you dislike and leave."

"That's reasonable," said Usayd and, sticking his spear in the ground, sat down. Musab was not compelling him to do anything. He was not denouncing him. He was merely inviting him to listen. If he was satisfied, well and good. If not, then Musab would leave his district and his clan without any fuss and go to another district.

Musab began telling him about Islam and recited the Quran to him. Even before Usayd spoke, it was clear from his face, now radiant and expectant, that faith had entered his heart. He said:

"How beautiful are these words and how true! What does a person do if he wants to enter this religion?"

"Have a bath, purify yourself and your clothes. Then utter the testimony of Truth (Shahadah), and perform Salat. Usayd left the gathering and was absent for only a short while. He returned and testified

that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He then prayed two rakats and said:

"After me, there is a man who if he follows you, everyone of his people will follow him. I shall send him to you now. He is 'Sad ibn Muadh."

Sad ibn Muadh came and listened to Musab. He was convinced and satisfied and declared his submission to God. He was followed by another important Yathribite, Sad ibn Ubadah. Before long, the people of Yathrib were all in a flurry, asking one another.

"If Usayd ibn Khudayr, Sad ibn Muadh and Sad ibn Ubadah have accepted the new religion, how can we not follow? Let's go to Musab and believe with him. They say that truth emanates from his lips."

The first ambassador of the Prophet, peace be on him, was thus supremely successful. The Prophet had chosen well. Men and women, the young and the old, the powerful and the weak accepted Islam at his hands. The course of Yathribite history had been changed forever. The way was being prepared for the great Hijrah. Yathrib was soon to become the center and the base for the Islamic state.

Less than a year after his arrival in Yathrib, Musab returned to Makkah. It was again in the season of pilgrimage. With him was a group of seventy-five Muslims from Madinah. Again at Aqabah, near Mina, they met the Prophet. There they solemnly undertook to defend the Prophet at all cost. Should they remain firm in their faith, their reward, said the Prophet, would be nothing less than Paradise. This second bayah or pledge which the Muslims of Yathrib made came to be called the Pledge of War.

From then on events moved swiftly. Shortly after the Pledge, the Prophet directed his persecuted followers to migrate to Yathrib where the new Muslims or Ansar (Helpers) had shown their willingness to give asylum and extend their protection to the afflic ted Muslims. The first of the Prophet's companions to arrive in Madinah were Musab ibn Umayr and the blind Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum. Abdullah also recited the Quran beautifully and according to one of the Ansar, both Musab and Abdullah recited the Quran for the people of Yathrib.

Musab continued to play a major role in the building of the new community. The next momentous situation in which we meet him was during the great Battle of Badr. After the battle was over, the Quraysh prisoners of war were brought to the Prophet who assig ned them to the custody of individual Muslims. "Treat them well," he instructed.

Among the prisoners was Abu Aziz ibn Umayr, the brother of Musab. Abu Aziz related what happened: "I was among a group of Ansar...Whenever they had lunch or dinner they would give me bread and dates to eat in obedience to the Prophet's instructions to th em to treat us well.

"My brother, Musab ibn Umayr, passed by me and said to the man from the Ansar who was holding me prisoner:

'Tie him firmly... His mother is a woman of great wealth and maybe she would ransom him for you.'" Abu Aziz could not believe his ears. Astonished, he turned to Musab and asked: "My brother, is this your instruction concerning me?"

"He is my brother, not you," replied Musab thus affirming that in the battle between iman and kufr, the bonds of faith were stronger than the ties of kinship.

At the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet called upon Musab, now well-known as Musab al-Khayr (the Good), to carry the Muslim standard. At the beginning of th e battle, the Muslims seemed to be gaining the upper hand. A group of Muslims then went against the orders of the Prophet and deserted their positions. The mushrikin forces rallied again and launched a counterattack. Their main objective, as they cut through the Muslim forces, was to get to the noble Prophet.

Musab realized the great danger facing the Prophet. He raised the standard high and shouted the takbir. With the standa rd in one hand and his sword in the other, he plunged into the Quraysh forces. The odds were against him. A Quraysh horseman moved in close and severed his right hand. Musab was heard to repeat the words:

"Muhammad is only a Messenger. Messengers have passed away before him," showing that however great his attachment was to the Prophet himself, his struggle above all was for the sake of God and for making His word supreme. His left hand was then severed also and as he held the standard between the stumps of his arms, to console himself he repeated: "Muhammad is only a Messenger of God. Messengers have passed away before him." Musab was then hit by a spear. He fell and the standard fell. The words he repeated, every time he was struck were later revealed to the Prophet and completed, and became part of the Quran.

After the battle, the Prophet and his companions went through the battlefield, bidding farewell to the martyrs. When they came to Musab's body, tears flowed. Khabbah related that they could not find any cloth with which to shroud Musab's body, except his own garment. When they covered his head with it, his legs showed and when his legs were covered, his head was exposed and the Prophet instructed:

"Place the garment over his head and cover his feet and legs with the leaves of the idhkhir (rue) plant."

The Prophet felt deep pain and sorrow at the number of his companions who were killed at the Battle of Uhud. These included his uncle Hamzah whose body was horribly mutilated. But it was over the body of Musab that the Prophet stood, with great emotion. He remembered Musab as he first saw him in Makkah, stylish and elegant, and then looked at the short burdah which was now the only garment he possessed and he recited the verse of the Quran:

"Among the believers are men who have been true to what they have pledged to God."

The Prophet then cast his tender eyes over the battle field on which lay the dead companions of Musab and said: "The Messenger of God testifies that you are martyrs in the sight of God on the day of Qiyamah."

Then turning to the living companions around him he said: "O People! Visit them, send peace on them for, by Him in whose hand is my soul, any Muslim who sends peace on them until the day of Qiyamah, they would return the salutation of peace."

As-salaamu alayka yaa Musab...

As-salaamu alaykum, ma'shar ash-shudhadaa.

As-salaamu alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuhu.

Peace be on you, O Musab...

Peace be on you all, O martyrs. .

Peace be on you and the mercy and blessings of God.

From Alim® Online

Nuaym Ibn Masud

Nuaym ibn Masud was from Najd in the northern highlands of Arabia. He belonged to the powerful Ghatafan tribe. As a young man, he was clever and alert. He was full of enterprise and travelled widely. He was resourceful, every ready to take up a challenge and not prepared to allow any problem to get the better of him.

This son of the desert was endowed with extraordinary presence of mind and unusual subtlety. He was however someone who liked to enjoy himself and gave himself over to the pursuit of youthful passions. He loved music and took delight in the company of songstresses. Often when he felt the urge to listen to the strings of a musical instrument or to enjoy the company of a singer, he would leave the hearths of his people in the Najd and make his way to Yathrib and in particular to the Jewish community which was widely known for its song and music.

While in Yathrib, Nuaym was known to spend generously and he in turn would be lavishly entertained. In this way Nuaym came to develop strong links among the Jews of the city and in particular with the Banu Qurayzah.

At the time when God favored mankind by sending His Prophet with the religion of guidance and truth and the valleys of Makkah glowed with the light of Islam, Nuaym ibn Masud was still given over to the pursuit of sensual satisfaction. He stopped firmly opposed to the religion partly out of fear that he would be obliged to change and give up his pursuit of pleasure. And it was not long before he found himself being drawn into joining the fierce opposition to Islam and waging war against the Prophet and his companions.

The moment of truth for Nuaym came during the great siege of Madinah which took place in the fifth year of the Prophet's stay in the city. We need to go back a little to pick up the threads of the story.

Two years before the siege, the Prophet was compelled to banish a group of Jews belonging to the tribe of Banu an-Nadir from Madinah because of their collaboration with the Quraysh enemy. The Banu Nadir migrated to the north and settled in Khaybar and other oases along the trade route to Syria. They at once began to incite the tribes both near and far against the Muslims. Caravans going to Madinah were harassed partly to put economic pressure on the city.

But this was not enough. Leaders of the Banu an-Nadir got together and decided to form a mighty alliance or confederacy of as many tribes as possible to wage war on the Prophet, and to put an end once and for all to his mission. The Nadirites went to the Quraysh in Makkah and urged them to continue the fight against the Muslims. They made a pact with the Quraysh to attack Madinah at a specified time.

After Makkah, the Nadirite leaders set out northwards on a journey of some one thousand kilometers to meet the Ghatafan. They promised the Ghatafan the entire annual date harvest of Khaybar for waging war against Islam and its Prophet. They informed the Ghatafan of the pact they had concluded with the Quraysh and persuaded them to make a similar agreement.

Other tribes were also persuaded to join the mighty alliance. From the north came the Banu Asad and

the Fazar. From the south the Ahabish, allies of the Quraysh, the Banu Sulaym and others. At the appointed time, the Quraysh set out from Makkah in large numbers on cavalry and on foot under the Leadership of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. The Ghatafan too set out from Najd in large numbers under the leadership of Ubaynah ibn Hisn. In the vanguard of the Ghatafan army was Nuaym ibn Masud.

News of the impending attack on Madinah reached the Prophet while he was half-way on a long expedition to Dumat al-Jandal on the Syrian border some fifteen days journey from Madinah. The tribe at Dumat al-Jandal was molesting caravans bound for Madinah and their action was probably prompted by the Banu an-Nadir to entice the Prophet away from Madinah. With the Prophet away, they reasoned, it would be easier for the combined tribal forces from the north and the south to attack Madinah and deal a mortal blow to the Muslim community with the help of disaffected persons from within the city itself.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, hurried back to Madinah and conferred with the Muslims. The forces of the Ahzab or the confederate enemy tribes amounted to over ten thousand men while the Muslims fighting were just three thousand men. It was unanimously decided to defend the city from within and to prepare for a siege rather than fight in the open. The Muslims were in dire straits.

"When they came upon you from above and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats. and you were imagining vain thoughts concerning God. Then were the believers sorely tried and shaken with a mighty shock." (The Quran, Surah al-Ahzab, 33:1O)

To protect the city, the Muslims decided to dig a ditch or khandaq. It is said that the ditch was about three and a half miles long and some ten yards wide and five yards deep. The three thousand Muslims were divided into groups of ten and each group was given a fixed number of cubits to dig. The digging of the ditch took several weeks to complete.

The ditch was just completed when the mighty enemy forces from the north and the south converged on Madinah. While they were within a short distance from the city the Nadirire conspirators approached their fellow Jews of the Banu Qur~yzah who lived in Madinah and tried to persuade them to join the war against the Prophet by helping the two armies approaching from Makkah and the north. The response of the Qurayzah Jews to the Nadirite leaders was: "You have indeed called us to participate in something which we like and desire to have accomplished. But you know there is a treaty between us and Muhammad binding us to keep the peace with him so long as we live secure and content in Madinah. You do realize that our pact with him is still valid. We are afraid that if Muhammad is victorious in this war he would then punish us severely and that he would expel us from Madinah as a result of our treachery towards him."

The Nadirire leaders however continued to pressurize the Banu Qurayzah to renege on their treaty. Treachery to Muhammad, they affirmed, was a good and necessary act. They assured the Banu Qurayzah that there was no doubt this time that the Muslims would be completely routed and Muhammad would be finished once and for all.

The approach of the two mighty armies strengthened the resolve of the Banu Qurayzah to disavow their treaty with Muhammad. They tore up the pact and declared their support for the confederates. The news fell on the Muslims ears with the force of a thunderbolt.

The confederate armies were now pressing against Madinah. They effectively cut off the city and prevented food and provisions and any form of outside help or reinforcement from reaching the inhabitants of the city. After the terrible exhaustions of the past months the Prophet now felt as if they had fallen between the jaws of the enemy. The Quraysh and [he Ghatafan were besieging the city from

without. The Banu Qurayzah were laying in wait behind the Muslims, ready to pounce from within the city. Added to this. the hypocrites of Madinah, those who had openly professed Islam but remained secretly opposed to the Prophet and his mission, began to come out openly and cast doubt and ridicule on the Prophet.

"Muhammad promised us." they said, "that we would gain possession of the treasures of Chosroes and Caesar and here we are today with not d single one of us being able to guarantee that he could go to the toilet safely to relieve himself!"

Thereafter, group after group of the inhabitants of Madinah began to disassociate themselves from the Prophet expressing fear for their women and children and for their homes should the Banu Qurayzah attack once the fighting began. The enemy forces though vastly superior in numbers were confounded by the enormous ditch. They had never seen or heard of such a military stratagem among the Arabs. Nonetheless they tightened their siege of the city. At the same time they attempted to breach the ditch at some narrow points but were repulsed by the vigilant Muslims. So hard-pressed were the Muslims that the Prophet Muhammad and his companions once did not even have time for Salat and the Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha prayers had to be performed during the night.

As the siege wore on and the situation became more critical for the Muslims. Muhammad turned fervently to his Lord for succour and support.

"O Allah," he prayed, "I beseech you to grant Your promise of victory. O Allah I beseech You to grant your promise of victory."

On that night, as the Prophet prayed, Nuaym lay tossing in his bivouac. He could not sleep. He kept gazing at the stars in the vast firmament above. He thought hard and long and suddenly he found himself exclaiming and asking: "Woe to you, Nuaym! What is it really that has brought you from those far off places in Najd to fight this man and those with him? Certainly you are not fighting him for the triumph of right or for the protection of some honor violated. Really you have only come here to fight for some unknown reason. Is it reasonable that someone with a mind such as yours should fight and kill or be killed for no cause whatsoever? Woe to you, Nuaym. What is it that has caused you to draw your sword against this righteous man who exhorts his followers to justice, good deeds and helping relatives? And what is it that has driven you to sink your spear into the bodies of his followers who follow the message of guidance and truth that he brought?"

Nuaym thus struggled with his conscience and debated with himself. Then he came to a decision. Suddenly he stood upright, determined. The doubts were gone. Under the cover of darkness, he slipped away from the camp of his tribe and made his way to the Prophet of God, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

When the Prophet beheld him, standing erect in his presence, he exclaimed, "Nuaym ibn Masud?"

"Yes, O Messenger of God," declared Nuaym. "What has brought you here at this hour?"

"I came", said Nuaym, "to declare that there is no god but Allah and that you are the servant of God and His Messenger and that the message you have brought is

He went on: "I have declared my submission to God, O Messenger of God, but my people do not know of my submission. Command me therefore to do whatever you desire."

"You are only one person among us," observed the Prophet. "So go to your people and act as if you have nothing to do with us for indeed war is treachery."

"Yes, O Messenger of God," replied Nuaym. And if God wills, you shall witness what pleases you." Without losing any time, Nuaym went to the Banu Qurayzah. He was, as was mentioned earlier, a close friend of the tribe. "O Bani Qurayzah," he said. "You have known my love for you and my sincerity in advising you."

"Yes ," they agreed, "but what are you suspicious of so

far as we are concerned?" Nuaym continued: "The Quraysh and the Ghatafan have their own interests in this war which are different from your interests." "How so?" they queried.

"This is your city," Nuaym asserted. "You have your wealth, your children and your womenfolk here and it is not in your power to flee and take refuge in another city. On the other hand, the Quraysh and the Ghatafan have their land, their wealth, their children and their womenfolk away from this city. They came to fight Muhammad. They urged you to break the treaty you had with him and to help them against him. So you responded positively to them. If they were to be victorious in their encounter with him, they would reap the booty. But if they fail to subdue him, they would return to their country safe and sound and they would leave you to him and he would be in a position to exact the most bitter revenge on you. You know very well that you would have no power to confront him."

"You are right," they said. "But what suggestion do you have?" "My opinion," Nuaym suggested, "is that you should not join forces with them until you take a group of their prominent men as hostages. In that way you could carry on the fight against Muhammad either till victory or till the last of your men or theirs perish. (They would not be able to leave you in the lurch)." "You have advised well," they responded and agreed to take up his suggestion.

Nuaym then left and went to Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, the Quraysh leader and spoke to him and other Quraysh leaders. "O Quraysh," said Nuaym, "You know my affection for you and my enmity towards Muhammad. I have heard some news and I thought it my duty to disclose it to you but you should keep it confidential and do not attribute it to me"

"You must inform us of this matter," insisted the Quraysh.

Nuaym continued: "The Banu Qurayzah now regret that they have agreed to participate in the hostilities against Muhammad. They fear that you would turn back and abandon them to him. So they have sent a message to Muhammad saying: 'We are sorry for what we have done and we are determined to return to the treaty and a state of peace with you. Would it please you then if we take several Quraysh and Ghatafan nobles and surrender them to you? We will then join you in fighting them - the Quraysh and the Ghatafan - until you finish them off.' The Prophet has sent back a reply to them saying he agrees. If therefore the Jews send a delegation to you demanding hostages from among your men do not hand over a single person to them. And do not mention a word of what I said to you."

"What a good ally you are. May you be rewarded well ," said Abu Sufyan gratefully.

Nuaym then went to his own people the Ghatafan, and spoke to them in a similar vein. He gave them the same warning against expected treachery from the Banu Qurayzah.

Abu Sufyan wanted to test the Banu Qurayzah so he sent his son to them. "My father sends greetings of

peace to you," began Abu Sufyan's son. "He says that our siege of Muhammad and his companions has been a protracted affair and we have become weary...We are now determined to fight Muhammad and finish him off. My father has sent me to you to ask you to join battle with Muhammad tomorrow."

"But tomorrow is Saturday," said the Jews of Banu Qurayzah, "and we do not work at all on Saturdays. Moreover, we would not fight with you until you hand over to us seventy of your nobles and nobles from the Ghatafan as hostages. We fear that if the fighting becomes too intense for you would hasten back home and leave us alone to Muhammad. You know that we have no power to resist him..."

When Abu Sufyan's son returned to his people and told them what he had heard from the Banu Qurayzah, they shouted in unison!

"Damned be the sons of monkeys and swine! By God, if they were to demand from us a single sheep as a hostage, we would not give them".

And so it was that Nuaym was successful in causing disharmony among the confederates and splitting their ranks.

While the mighty alliance was in this state of disarray, God sent down on the Quraysh and their allies a fierce and bitterly cold wind which swept their tents and their vessels away, extinguished their fires, buffeted their faces and cast sand in their eves. In this terrible state of confusion the allies fled under cover of darkness.

That very night the Prophet had sent one his companions, Hudayfah ibn al-Yaman, to get information on the enemy's morale and intentions. He brought back the news that on the advice and initiative of Abu Sufyan, the enemy had turned on their heels and fled... The news quickly spread through the Muslims ranks and they shouted in joy and relief!

La ilaha ilia Allahu wahdah

Sadaqa wadah

Wa nasara abdah

Wa a azza jundah

Wa hazama-l ahzaba wahdah.

There is no god but Allah alone

To His promise He has been true

His servant He has helped

His forces He has strengthened

And Alone the confederates He has destroyed.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, praised and gave thanks to his Lord for His deliverance from the threat posed by the mighty alliance. Nuaym, as a result of his subtle but major role in the blasting of the

alliance, gained the confidence of the Prophet who entrusted him thereafter with many a difficult task. He became the standard-bearer of the Prophet on several occasions.

Three years after the Battle of the Ditch, on the day the Muslims marched victoriously into Makkah, Abu Sufyan ibn Harb stood surveying the Muslim armies. He beheld

a man carrying the Ghatafan flag and asked: "Who is this?" "Nuaym ibn Masud," came the reply.

"He did a terrible thing to us at al-Khandaq," Abu Sufyan confessed. "By God, he was certainly one of the fiercest enemies of Muhammad and here he is now carrying his people's flag in the ranks of Muhammad and coming to wage war on us under his leadership."

Through the grace of God and the magnanimity of the noble Prophet, Abu Sufyan himself was soon to join the same ranks.

Rabiah Ibn Kab

Here is the story of Rabiah told in his own words: "I was still quite young when the light of iman shone through me and my heart was opened to the teachings of Islam. And when my eyes beheld the Messenger of God, for the first time, I loved him with a lov e that possessed my entire being. I loved him to the exclusion of everyone else.

One day I said to myself:

'Woe to you, Rabi'ah. Why don't you put yourself completely in the service of the Messenger of God, peace be on him. Go and suggest this to him. If he is pleased with you, you would find happiness in being near him. You will be successful through love for him and you will have the good fortune of obtaining the good in this world and the good in the next.'

This I did hoping that he would accept me in his service. He did not dash my hopes. He was pleased that I should be his servant. From that day, I lived in the shadow of the noble Prophet. I went with him wherever he went. I moved in his orbit whenever and wherever he turned. Whenever he cast a glance in my direction, I would leap to stand in his presence. Whenever he expressed a need, he would find me hurrying to fulfil it.

I would serve him throughout the day. When the day was over and he had prayed Salat al-Isha and retired to his home, I would think about leaving. But I would soon say to myself:

'Where would you go, Rabi'ah? Perhaps you may be required to do something for the Prophet during the night.' So I would remain seated at his door and would not leave the threshold of his house. The Prophet would spend part of his night engaged in Salat. I would hear him reciting the opening chapter of the Quran and he would continue reciting sometimes for a third or a half of the night. I would become tired and leave or my eyes would get the better of me and I would fail asleep.

It was the habit of the Prophet, peace be on him, that if someone did him a good turn, he loved to repay that person with something more excellent. He wanted to do something for me too in return for my service to him. So one day he came up tome and said: 'O Rabi'ah ibn Kab.' 'Labbayk ya rasulullah wa Sadark - At your command, O Messenger of God and may God grant you happiness,' I responded. 'Ask of me anything and I will give it to you.'

I thought a little and then said: 'Give me some time, O Messenger of God, to think about what I should ask of

you. Then I will let you know.' He agreed.

At that time, I was a young man and poor. I had neither family, nor wealth, nor place of abode. I used to shelter in the Suffah of the mosque with other poor Muslims like myself. People used to call us the "guests of Islam". Whenever any Muslim brought so mething in charity to the Prophet, he would send it all to us. And if someone gave him a gift he would take some of it and leave the rest for us.

So, it occurred to me to ask the Prophet for some worldly good that would save me from poverty and make me like others who had wealth, wife and children. Soon, however, I said: 'May you perish Rabi'ah. The world is temporary and will pass away. You have y our share of sustenance in it which God has guaranteed and which must come to you. The Prophet, peace be on him, has a place with his Lord and no request would be refused him. Request him therefore, to ask Allah to grant you something of the bounty of the hereafter.'

I felt pleased and satisfied with this thought. I went to the Prophet and he asked: 'What do you say, O Rabi'ah?' 'O Messenger of God,' I said, 'I ask you to beseech God most High on my behalf to make me your companion in Paradise.'

'Who has advised you thus?' asked the Prophet.

'No by God,' I said, 'No one has advise me. But when you told me 'Ask of me anything and I will give to you,' I thought of asking you for something of the goodness of this world. But before long, I was guided to choose what is permanent and lasting agains t what is temporary and perishable. And so I have asked you to beseech God on my behalf that I may be your companion in Paradise.'

The Prophet remained silent for a long while and then asked: 'Any other request besides that, Rabi'ah?' 'No, O Messenger of God, Nothing can match what I have asked you.' 'Then, in that case, assist me for your sake by performing much prostration to God.'

So I began to exert myself in worship in order to attain the good fortune of being with the Prophet in Paradise just as I had the good fortune of being in his service and being his companion in this world.

Not long afterwards, the Prophet called me and asked: 'Don't you want to get married, Rabi'ah?' 'I do not want anything to distract me from your service,' I replied. 'Moreover, I don't have anything to give as mahr (dowry) to a wife nor any place where I can accommodate a wife.'

The Prophet remained silent. When he saw me again he asked: 'Don't you want to get married, Rabi'ah?' I gave him the same reply as before. Left to myself again, I regretted what I had said and chided myself: 'Woe to you, Rabi'ah. By God, the Prophet knows better than you what is good for you in this world and the next and he also knows better than you what you possess. By God, if the Prophet, peace be on him, should ask me again to marry, I would reply positively.'

Before long, the Prophet asked me again: 'Don't you want to get married 'Rabi'ah?'

'Oh yes, Messenger of God,' I replied, 'but who will marry me when I am in the state you know.' 'Go to the family of so-and-so and say to them: the Prophet has instructed you to give your daughter in marriage to me.'

Timidly, I went to the family and said: 'The Messenger of God, peace be on him, has sent me to you to ask you to give your daughter in marriage to me.' 'Our daughter?' they asked, incredulously at first. 'Yes,' i replied.

'Welcome to the Messenger of God, and welcome to his messenger. By God, the messenger of God's Messenger shall only return with his mission fulfilled. 'So they made a marriage contract between me and her. I went back to the Prophet and reported:

'O Messenger of Allah. I have come from the best of homes. They believed me, they welcomed me, and

they made a marriage contract between me and their daughter. But from where do I get the mahr for her?'

The Prophet then sent for Buraydah ibn al-Khasib, one of the leading persons in my tribe, the Banu Asiam, and said to him: 'O Buraydah, collect a nuwat's weight in gold for Rabi'ah.

This they did and the Prophet said to me: 'Take this to them and say, this is the sadaq of your daughter.' I did so and they accepted it. They were pleased and said, This is much and good.' I went back to the Prophet and told him: 'I have never yet seen a people more generous than they. They were pleased with what I gave them in spite of its being little...Where can I get something for the walimah (marriage feast), O Prophet of God?'

The Prophet said to Buraydah 'Collect the price of a ram for Rabi'ah.' They bought a big fat ram for me and then the Prophet told me: 'Go to Aishah and tell her to give you whatever barley she has.'

Aishah gave me a bag with seven saas of barley and said: 'By God, we do not have any other food.' I set off with the ram and the barley to my wife's family. They said: 'We will prepare the barley but get your friends to prepare the ram for you.'

We slaughtered, skinned and cooked the ram. So we had bread and meat for the walimah. I invited the Prophet and he accepted my invitation.

The Prophet then gave me a piece of land near Abu Bakr's. From then I became concerned with the dunya, with material things. I had a dispute with Abu Bakr over a palm tree.

'It is in my land,' I insisted. 'No, it is in my land,' Abu Bakr countered. We started to argue. Abu Bakr cursed me, but as soon as he had uttered the offending word. he felt sorry and said to me: 'Rabiah, say the same word to me so that it could be consi dered as qisas -just retaliation.' 'No by God, I shall not,' I said.

'In that case, replied Abu Bakr. 'I shall go the Messenger of God and complain to him about your refusal to retaliate against me measure for measure.'

He set off and I followed him. My tribe, the Banu Asiam, also set off behind me protesting indignantly: 'He's the one who cursed you first and then he goes off to the Prophet before you to complain about you!' I turned to them and said: 'Woe to you! Do yo u know who this is? This is As-Siddiq... and he is the respected elder of the Muslims. Go back before he turns around, sees you and thinks that you have come to help me against him. He would then be more incensed and go to the Prophet in anger. The Prophe t would get angry on his account. Then Allah would be angry on their account and Rabi'ah would be finished.' They turned back.

Abu Bakr went to the Prophet and related the incident as it had happened. The Prophet raised his head and said to me:

'O Rabi'ah, what's wrong with you and as-Siddiq?' 'Messenger of God, he wanted me to say the same words to him as he had said to me and I did not.'

'Yes, don't say the same word to him as he had said to you. Instead say: 'May God forgive you Abu Bakr.' With tears in his eyes, Abu Bakr went away while saying: 'May God reward you with goodness for my sake, O Rabiah ibn Kab... 'May God reward you with g oodness for my sake, O Rabiah ibn

Kaab..."

Ramlah Bint Abi Sufyan

Abu Sufyan ibn Harb could not conceive of anyone among the Quraysh who would dare challenge his authority or go against his orders. He was after all, the sayyid or chieftain of Makkah who had to be obeyed and followed.

His daughter, Ramlah, known as Umm Habibah, however dared to challenge his authority when she rejected the deities of the Quraysh and their idolatrous ways. Together with her husband, Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, she put her faith in Allah alone and accepted the message of His prophet, Muhammad ibn Abdullah.

Abu Sufyan tried with all the power and force at his disposal to bring back his daughter and her husband to his religion and the religion of their forefathers. But he did not succeed. The faith which was embedded in the heart of Ramlah was too strong to b e uprooted by the hurricanes of Abu Sufyans fury.

Abu Sufyan remained deeply worried and concerned by his daughter's acceptance of Islam. He did not know how to face the Quraysh after she had gone against his will and he was clearly powerless to prevent her from following Muhammad. When the Quraysh reali zed though that Abu Sufyan himself was enraged by Ramlah and her husband, they were emboldened to treat them harshly. They unleashed the full fury of their persecution against them to such a degree that life in Makkah became unbearable.

In the fifth year of his mission, the Prophet, peace be on him, gave permission to the Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia. Ramlah, her little daughter Habibah, and her husband were among those who left.

Abu Sufyan and the Quraysh leaders found it difficult to accept that a group of Muslims had slipped out of their net of persecution and was enjoying the freedom to hold their beliefs and practice their religion in the land of the Negus. They therefore sen d messengers to the Negus to seek their extradition. The messengers tried to poison the mind of the Negus against the Muslims but after examining the Muslims beliefs and listening to the Quran being recited, the Negus concluded: "What has been revealed to your Prophet Muhammad and what Jesus the son of Mary preached came from the same source."

The Negus himself announced his faith in the one true God and his acceptance of the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be on him. He also announced his determination to protect the Muslim muhajirin.

The long journey on the road of hardship and tribulation had finally led to the oasis of serenity. So Umm Habibah felt. But she did not know that the new-found freedom and sense of peace were later to be shattered. She was to be put through a test of the most severe and harrowing kind.

One night, it is related, as Umm Habibah was asleep she had a vision in which she saw her husband in the midst of a fathomless ocean covered by wave upon wave of darkness. He was in a most perilous situation. She woke up, frightened. But she did not wish to tell her husband or anyone else what she had seen.

The day after that ominous night was not yet through when Ubaydallah ibn Jahsh announced his rejection of Islam and his acceptance of Christianity. What a terrible blow! Ramlah's sense of peace was

shattered. She did not expect this of her husband who pre sented her forthwith with the choice of a divorce or of accepting Christianity. Umm Habibah had three options before her. She could either remain with her husband and accept his call to become a Christian in which case she also would commit apostasy and - God forbid - deserve ignominy in this world and punishment in the hereafter. This was something she resolved she would never do even if she were subjected to the most horrible torture. Or, she could return to her father's house in Makkah - but she knew h e remained a citadel of shirk and she would be forced to live under him, subdued and suppressing her faith. Or, she could stay alone in the land of the Negus as a displaced fugitive - without country, without family and without a supporter.

She made the choice that she considered was the most pleasing to God. She made up her mind to stay in Abyssinia until such time as God granted her relief. She divorced her husband who lived only a short while after becoming a Christian. He had given himse lf over to frequenting wine merchants and consuming alcohol, the "mother of evils". This undoubtedly helped to destroy him.

Umm Habibah stayed in Abyssinia for about ten years. Towards the end of this time, relief and happiness came. It came from an unexpected quarter.

One morning bright and early, there was a loud knocking on her door. It was Abrahah, the special maid-servant of the Negus. Abrahah was beaming with joy as she greeted Umm Habibah and said: "The Negus sends his greetings and says to you that Muhammad, the Messenger of God, wants you to marry him and that he has sent a letter in which he has appointed him as his wakil to contract the marriage between you and him. If you agree, you are to appoint a wakil to act on your behalf."

Umm Habibah was in the clouds with happiness. She shouted to herself: "God has given you glad tidings. God has given you glad tidings." She took off her jewelry- her necklace and bracelets - and gave them to Abrahah. She took off her rings too and gave th em to her. And indeed if she had possessed all the treasures of the world, she would have given them to Abrahah at that moment of sheer joy. Finally she said to Abrahah: "I appoint Khalid ibn Said ibn al-Aas to act as wakil on my behalf for he is the clos est person to me."

In the palace of the Negus, set in the midst of beautiful gardens and luxuriant vegetation and in one of the lavishly decorated, sumptuously furnished and brightly lit halls, the group of Muslims living in Abyssinia gathered. They included Jafar ibn Abi T alib, Khalid ibn Said, Abdullah ibn Hudhafah as-Sahmi and others. They had gathered to witness the conclusion of the marriage contract between Umm Habibah, the daughter of Abu Sufyan, and Muhammad, the Messenger of God. When the marriage was finalized, th e Negus addressed the gathering: "I praise God, the Holy, and I declare that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger and that He gave the good tidings to Jesus the son of Mary.

"The Messenger of God, peace be on him, has requested me to conclude the marriage contract between him and Umm Habibah the daughter of Abu Sufyan. I agreed to do what he requested and on his behalf I give her a mahr or dowry of four hundred gold dinars." He handed over the amount to Khalid ibn Said who stood up and said: "All praise is due to God. I praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness and I turn to Him in repentance. I declare that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger whom He has sent with t he religion of guidance and truth so that it might prevail over all other forms of religion even if the disbelievers were to dislike this.

"I have agreed to do what the Prophet, peace be upon him, has requested and acted as the wakil on behalf of Umm Habibah, the daughter of Abu Sufyan. May God bless His Messenger and his wife.

"Congratulations to Umm Habibah on account of the goodness which God has ordained for her."

Khalid took the mahr and handed it over to Umm Habibah. The Sahabah thereupon got up and prepared to leave but the Negus said to them: "Sit down for it is the practice of the Prophets to serve food at marriages."

There was general rejoicing at the court of the Negus as the guests sat down again to eat and celebrate the joyous occasion. Umm Habibah especially could hardly believe her good fortune and she later described how she was eager to share her happiness. She said: "When I received the money as mahr, I sent fifty mithqals of gold to Abrahah who had brought me the good news and I said to her: 'I gave you what I did when you gave me the good news because at that time I did not have any money.'

"Shortly afterwards, Abrahah came to me and returned the gold. She also produced a case which contained the necklace I had given to her. She returned that to me and said: 'The King has instructed me not to take anything from you and he his commanded the women in his household to present you with gifts of perfume.'

"On the following day, she brought me ambergris, safron and aloes and said: 'I have a favor to ask of you.' 'What is it?' I asked. 'I have accepted Islam ,' she said, 'and now follow the religion of Muhammad. Convey to him my salutation of peace and let h im know that I believe in Allah and His Prophet. Please don't forget.' She then helped me to get ready for my journey to the Prophet.

"When I met the Prophet, peace be on him, I told him all about the arrangements that were made for the marriage and about my relationship with Abrahah. I told him she had become a Muslim and conveyed to him her greetings of peace. He was filled with joy a t the news and said: 'Wa alayha as-salam wa rahmatullahi was barakatuhu and on her be peace and the mercy and blessings of God. "

Rumaysa Bint Milhan

Even before Islam was introduced to Yathrib, Rumaysa was known for her excellent character, the power of her intellect and her independent attitude of mind. She was known by various names including Rumaysa and Ghumaysa, but these were possibly nickna mes. One historian says that her real name was Sahlah but later she was popularly known as Umm Sulaym.

Umm Sulaym was first married to Malik ibn an-Nadr and her son by this marriage was the famous Anas ibn Malik, one of the great companions of the Prophet.

Umm Sulaym was one of the first women of Yathrib to accept Islam. She was influenced by the refined, dedicated and persuasive Musab ibn Umayr who was sent out as the first missionary or ambassador of Islam by the noble Prophet. This was after the first pl edge of Aqabah. Twelve men of Yathrib had gone to Aqabah on the outskirts of Makkah to pledge loyalty to the Prophet. This was the first major break through for the mission of the Prophet for many years.

Umm Sulaym's decision to accept Islam was made without the knowledge or consent of her husband, Malik ibn an-Nadr. He was absent from Yathrib at the time and when he returned he felt some change had come over his household and asked his wife: "Have you be en rejuvenated?" "No," she said, "but I (now) believe in this man (meaning the Prophet Muhammad)."

Malik was not pleased especially when his wife went on to announce her acceptance of Islam in public and instruct her son Anas in the teachings and practice of the new faith. She taught him to say la ilaha ilia Allah and Ash hadu anna Muhammada-r Rasulull ah. The young Anas repeated this simple but profound declaration of faith clearly and emphatically.

Umm Sulaym's husband was now furious. He shouted at her: "Don't corrupt my son." "I am not corrupting him ," she replied firmly.

Her husband then left the house and it is reported that he was set upon by an enemy of his and was killed. The news shocked but apparently did not upset Umm Sulaym greatly. She remained devoted to her son Anas and was concerned about his. proper upbringin g. She is even reported to have said that she would not marry again unless Anas approved.

When it was known that Umm Sulaym had become a widow, one man, Zayd ibn Sahl, known as Abu Talhah, resolved to become engaged to her before anyone else did.

He was rather confident that Umm Sulaym would not pass him over for another. He was after all a strong and virile person who was quite rich and who possessed an imposing house that was much admired. He was an accomplished horseman and a skilful archer and , moreover, he belonged to the same clan as Umm Sulaym, the Banu Najjar.

Abu Talhah proceeded to Umm Sulaym's house. On the way he recalled that she had been influenced by the preaching of Musab ibn Umayr and had become a Muslim.

"So what?" he said to himself. "Was not her husband who died a firm adherent of the old religion and was he not opposed to Muhammad and his mission?"

Abu Talhah reached Umm Sulaym's house. He asked and was given permission to enter. Her son Anas was present. Abu Talhah explained why he had come and asked for her hand in marriage.

"A man like you, Abu Talhah ," she said, "is not (easily) turned away. But I shall never marry you while you are a kafir, an unbeliever."

Abu Talhah thought she was trying to put him off and that perhaps she had already preferred someone wealthier and more influential. He said to her:

"What is it that really prevents you from accepting me, Umm Sulaym? Is it the yellow and the white metals (gold and silver)?"

"Gold and silver?" she asked somewhat taken aback and in a slightly censuring tone. "Yes," he said. "I swear to you, Abu Talhah, and I swear to God and His Messenger that if you accept Islam, I shall be pleased to accept you as a husband, without any gold or silver. I shall consider your acceptance of Islam as my mahr."

Abu Talhah understood well the implications of her words. His mind turned to the idol he had made from wood and on which he lavished great attention in the same way that important men of his tribe venerated and cared for their personal idols.

The opportunity was right for Umm Sulaym to stress the futility of such idol worship and she went on: "Don't you know Abu Talhah, that the god you worship besides Allah grew from the earth?" "That's true," he said.

"Don't you feel stupid while worshipping part of a tree while you use the rest of it for fuel to bake bread or warm yourself? (If you should give up these foolish beliefs and practices) and become a Muslim, Abu Talhah, I shall be pleased to accept you as a husband and I would not want from you any sadaqah apart from your acceptance of Islam."

"Who shall instruct me in Islam?" asked Abu Talhah. "I shall," Umm Sulaym replied. "How?"

"Utter the declaration of truth and testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Then go to your house, destroy your idol and throw it away."

Abu Talhah left and reflected deeply on what Umm Sulaym had said. He came back to her beaming with happiness.

"I have taken your advice to heart. I declare that there is no god but Allah and I declare that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Umm Sulaym and Abu Talhah were married. Anas, her son, was pleased and the Muslims would say: "We have never yet heard of a mahr that was more valuable and precious than that of Umm Sulaym for she made Islam her mahr."

Umm Sulaym was pleased and delighted with her new husband who placed his unique energies and talents in the service of Islam. He was one of the seventy three men who swore allegiance to the Prophet

at the second Pledge of Aqabah. With him, according to on e report, was his wife Umm Sulaym. Two other women, the celebrated Nusaybah bint Kab and Asma bint Amr witnessed Aqabah and took the oath of allegiance to the Prophet.

Abu Talhah was devoted to the Prophet and took enormous delight in simply looking at him and listening to the sweetness of his speech. He participated in all the major military campaigns. He lived a very ascetic life and was known to fast for long periods at a time. It is said that he had a fantastic orchard in Madinah with date palms and grapes and running water. One day while he was performing Salat in the shade of the trees, a beautiful bird with brightly colored plumage flew in front of him. He became engrossed in the scene and forgot how many rakats he had prayed. Two? Three? When he completed the Prayer he went to the Prophet and described how he had been distracted. In the end, he said: "Bear witness, Messenger of Allah, that I hand over this orcha rd as a charity for the sake of Allah, the Exalted."

Abu Talhah and Umm Sulaym had an exemplary Muslim family life, devoted to the Prophet and the service of Muslims and Islam. The Prophet used to visit their home. Sometimes when the time of Prayer came, he would pray on a mat provided by Umm Sulaym. Someti mes also he would have a siesta in their house and, as he slept, she would wipe the perspiration from his forehead. Once when the Prophet awoke from his siesta, he asked: "Umm Sulaym, what are you doing?" "I am taking these (drops of perspiration) as a ba rakah (blessing) which comes from you ," she replied.

At another time, the Prophet went to their house and Umm Sulaym offered him dates and butterfat but he did not have any of it because he was fasting. Occasionally, she would send her son Anas with bags of dates to his house.

It was noticed that the Prophet, peace be on him, had a special compassion for Umm Sulaym and her family and when asked about it, he replied: "Her brother was killed beside me."

Umm Sulaym also had a well-known sister, Umm Haram, the wife of the imposing Ubadah ibn as-Samit. She died at sea during a naval expedition and was buried in Cyprus. Umm Sulaym's husband, Abu Talhah, also died while he was on a naval expedition during the time of the third Caliph, Uthman, and was buried at sea.

Umm Sulaym herself was noted for her great courage and bravery. During the Battle of Uhud, she carried a dagger in the folds of her dress. She gave water to and tended the wounded and she made attempts to defend the Prophet when the tide of battle was tur ning against him. At the Battle of Khandaq, the Prophet saw her carrying a dagger and he asked her what she was doing with it. She said: "It is to fight those who desert."

"May God grant you satisfaction in that," replied the Prophet. In the face of adversity, Umm Sulaym displayed a unique calmness and strength. One of her young sons (Umayr) fell sick and died while her husband was away looking after his orchards. She bathe d the child and wrapped him in shrouds. She told others at her home that they should not inform Abu Talhah because she herself wanted to tell him.

Umm Sulaym had another son whose name was Abdullah. A few days after she gave birth, she sent Anas with the baby and a bag of dates to the Prophet. The Prophet placed the baby on his lap. He crushed the dates in his mouth and put some in the baby's mouth. The baby sucked the dates with relish and the Prophet said: "The Ansar are only fond of dates."

Abdullah eventually grew up and had seven children all of whom memorized the Quran.

Umm Sulaym was a model Muslim, a model wife and mother. Her belief in God was strong and uncompromising. She was not prepared to endanger her faith and the upbringing of her children for wealth and luxury, however abundant and tempting.

She was devoted to the Prophet and dedicated her son Anas to his service. She took the responsibility of educating her children and she played an active part in public life, sharing with the other Muslims the hardships and the joys of building a community and living for the pleasure of God.

Sad Ibn Abi Waqqas

From Alim® Online

We are now in a small town in a narrow valley. There is no vegetation, no livestock, no gardens, no rivers. Desert after desert separates the town from the rest of the world. During the day the heat of the sun is unbearable and the nights are still and lonely. Tribes flock to it like animals in the open country flock to a water-hole. No government rules. There is no religion to guide people except one which promotes the worship of stone idols. There is no knowledge except priestcraft and a love for ele gant poetry. This is Makkah and these are the Arabs.

In this town lies a young man who has not yet seen twenty summers. He is short and well-built and has a very heavy crop of hair. People compare him to a young lion. He comes from a rich and noble family. He is very attached to his parents and is particul arly fond of his mother. He spends much of his time making and repairing bows and arrows and practising archery as if preparing himself for some great encounter. People recognize him as a serious and intelligent young man. He finds no satisfaction in the religion and way of life of his people, their corrupt beliefs and disagreeable practices. His name is Sad ibn Abi Waqqas.

One morning at about this time in his life the genial Abu Bakr came up and spoke softly to him. He explained that Muhammad ibn Abdullah the son of his late cousin Aminah bint Wahb had been given Revelations and sent with the religion of guidance and truth . Abu Bakr then took him to Muhammad in one of the valleys of Makkah. It was late afternoon by this time and the Prophet had just prayed Salat al-Asr. Sad was excited and overwhelmed and responded readily to the invitation to truth and the religion of One God. The fact that he was one of the first persons to accept Islam was something that pleased him greatly.

The Prophet, peace be on him, was also greatly pleased when Sad became a Muslim. He saw in him signs of excellence. The fact that he was still in his youth promised great things to come. It was as if this glowing crescent would become a shining full moon before long. Perhaps other young people of Makkah would follow his example, including some of his relations. For Sad ibn Abi Waqqas was in fact a maternal uncle of the Prophet since he belonged to the Bani Zuhrah, the clan of Aminah bint Wahb, the mother of the Prophet, peace be upon him. For this reason he is sometimes referred to as Sad of Zuhrah, to distinguish him from several others whose first name was Sad.

The Prophet is reported to have been pleased with his family relationship to Sad. Once as he was sitting with his companions, he saw Sad approaching and he said to them: "This is my maternal uncle. Let a man see his maternal uncle!"

While the Prophet was delighted with Sad's acceptance of Islam, others including and especially his mother were not. Sad relates: "When my mother heard the news of my Islam, she flew into a rage. She came up to me and said:

"O Sad! What is this religion that you have embraced which has taken you away from the religion of your mother and father...? By God, either you forsake your new religion or I would not eat or drink until I die. Your heart would be broken with grief for m e and remorse would consume you on account of the

deed which you have done and people would censure you forever more.'

'Don't do (such a thing), my mother,' I said, 'for I would not give up my religion for anything.'

However, she went on with her threat... For days she neither ate nor drank. She became emaciated and weak. Hour after hour, I went to her asking whether I should bring her some food or something to drink but she persistently refused, insisting that she wo uld neither eat nor drink until she died or I abandoned my religion. I said to her:

'Yaa Ummaah! In spite of my strong love for you, my love for God and His Messenger is indeed stronger. By God, if you had a thousand souls and one soul after another were to depart, I would not abandon this my religion for anything.' When she saw that I w as determined she relented unwillingly and ate and drank."

It was concerning Sad's relationship with his mother and her attempt to force him to recant his faith that the words of the Quran were revealed: "And we enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents. In pain upon pain did his mother bear him and his weaning took two years. So show gratitude to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final destiny.

"But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, obey them not. Yet bear them company in this life with justice and consideration and follow the way of those who turn to Me. In the end, the return of you all i s to Me and I shall tell you (the truth and meaning of) all that you used to do."
,i>(Surah Luqman, 31: 14-15).

In these early days of Islam, the Muslims were careful not to arouse the sensibilities of the Quraysh. They would often go out together in groups to the glens outside Makkah where they could pray together without being seen. But one day a number of idolat ers came upon them while they were praying and rudely interrupted them with ridicule. The Muslims felt they could not suffer these indignities passively and they came to blows with the idolaters. Sad ibn Abi Waqqas struck one of the disbelievers with the jawbone of a camel and wounded him. This was the first blood shed in the conflict between Islam and kufr - a conflict that was later to escalate and test the patience and courage of the Muslims.

After the incident, however, the Prophet enjoined his companions to be patient and forbearing for this was the command of God: "And bear with patience what they say and avoid them with noble dignity. And leave Me alone to deal with those who give the lie to the Truth, those who enjoy the blessings of life (without any thought of God) and bear with them for a little while."
(The Quran, Surah al Muzzammil, 71: 1O).

More than a decade later when permission was given for the Muslims to fight. Sad ibn Abi Waqqas was to play a distinguished role in many of the engagements that took place both during the time of the Prophet and after. He fought at Badr together with his young brother Umayr who had cried to be allowed to accompany the Muslim army for he was only in his early teens. Sad returned to Madinah alone for Umayr was one of the fourteen Muslim martyrs who fell in the battle.

At the Battle of Uhud, Sad was specially chosen as one of the best archers together with Zayd, Saib the son of Uthman ibn Mazun and others. Sad was one of those who fought vigorously in defence of the Prophet after some Muslims had deserted their positi ons. To urge him on, the Prophet, peace be on him, said: "Irmi Sad...Fidaaka Abi wa Ummi " Shoot, Sad ...may my mother and father be your ransom."

Of this occasion, Ali ibn Abi Talib said that he had not yet heard the Prophet, peace be on him, promising such a ransom to anyone except Sad. Sad is also known as the first companion to have shot an arrow in defence of Islam. And the Prophet once prayed for him:

"O Lord, direct his shooting and respond to his prayer." Sad was one of the companions of the Prophet who was blessed with great wealth. Just as he was known for his bravery, so he was known for his generosity. During the Farewell Pilgrimage with the Prop het, he fell ill. The Prophet came to visit him and Sad said:

"O Messenger of God. I have wealth and I only have one daughter to inherit from me. Shall I give two thirds of my wealth as sadaqah?"

"No," replied the Prophet.

"Then, (shall I give) a half?" asked Sad and the Prophet again said 'no'.

"Then, (shall I give) a third?' asked Sad.

"Yes," said the Prophet. "The third is much. Indeed to leave your heirs well-off' is better than that you should leave them dependent on and to beg from people. If you spend anything seeking to gain thereby the pleasure of God, you will be rewarded for it even if it is a morsel which you place in your wife's mouth."

Sad did not remain the father of just one child but was blessed thereafter with many children.

Sad is mainly renowned as the commander-in-chief of the strong Muslim army which Umar despatched to confront the Persians at Qadisiyyah. Umar wanted nothing less than an end to Sasanian power which for centuries had dominated the region.

To confront the numerous and well-equipped Persians was a most daunting task. The most powerful force had to be mustered. Umar sent despatches to Muslim governors throughout the state to mobilize all able-bodied persons who had weapons or mounts, or who h ad talents of oratory and other skills to place at the service of the battle.

Bands of Mujahidin then converged on Madinah from every part of the Muslim domain. When they had all gathered, Umar consulted the leading Muslims about the appointment of a commander-in-chief over the mighty army. Umar himself thought of leading the army but Ali suggested that the Muslims were in great need of him and he should not endanger his life. Sad was then chosen as commander and Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl, one of the veterans among the Sahabah said:

"You have chosen well! Who is there like Sad?" Umar stood before the great army and bade farewell to them. To the commander-in-chief he said:

"O Sad! Let not any statement that you are the uncle of the Messenger of God or that you are the companion of the Messenger of God distract you from God. God Almighty does not obliterate evil with evil but he wipes out evil with good.

"O Sad! There is no connection between God and anyone except obedience to Him. In the sight of God all people whether nobleman or commoner are the same. Allah is their Lord and they are His servants seeking elevation through taqwa and seeking to obtain wh at is with God through obedience. Consider

how the Messenger of God used to act with the Muslims and act accordingly..."

Umar thus made it clear that the army was not to seek conquest for the sake of it and that the expedition was not for seeking personal glory and fame.

The three thousand strong army set off. Among them were ninety nine veterans of Badr, more than three hundred of those who took the Pledge of Riffwan (Satisfaction) at Hudaybiyyah and three hundred of those who had participated in the liberation of Makk ah with the noble Prophet. There were seven hundred sons of the companions. Thousands of women also went on to battle as auxiliaries and nurses and to urge the men on to battle.

The army camped at Qadisiyyah near Hira. Against them the Persians had mobilized a force of 12O,OOO men under the leadership of their most brilliant commander, Rustum.

Umar had instructed Sad to send him regular despatches about the condition and movements of the Muslim forces, and of the deployment of the enemy's forces. Sad wrote to Umar about the unprecedented force that the Persians were mobilizing and Umar wrote to him:

"Do not be troubled by what you hear about them nor about the (forces, equipment and methods) they would deploy against you. Seek help with God and put your trust in Him and send men of insight, knowledge and toughness to him (the Chosroes) to invite him to God... And write to me daily."

Sad understood well the gravity of the impending battle and kept in close contact with the military high command in Madinah. Although commander-in-chief, he understood the importance of shura.

Sad did as Umar instructed and sent delegations of Muslims first to Yazdagird and then to Rustum, inviting them to accept Islam or to pay the jizyah to guarantee their protection and peaceful existence or to choose war if they so desired.

The first Muslim delegation which included Numan ibn Muqarrin was ridiculed by the Persian Emperor, Yazdagird. Sad sent a delegation to Rustum, the commander of the Persian forces. This was led by Rubiy ibn Aamir who, with spear in hand, went directly to Rustam's encampment. Rustam said to him:

"Rubiy! What do you want from us? If you want wealth we would give you. We would provide you with provisions until you are sated. We would clothe you. We would make you become rich and happy. Look, Rubiy! What do you see in this assembly of mine? No doub t you see signs of richness and luxury, these lush carpets, fine curtains, gold embroidered wails, carpets of silk...Do you have any desire that we should bestow some of these riches which we have on you?"

Rustum thus wanted to impress the Muslim and allure him from his purpose by this show of opulence and grandeur. Rubiy looked and listened unmoved and then said:

"Listen, O commander! Certainly God has chosen us that through us those of His creation whom He so desires could be drawn away from the worship of idols to Tawhid (the affirmation of the unity of God), from the narrow confines of preoccupation with this w orld to its boundless expanse and from the tyranny of rulers to justice of Islam.

"Whoever accepts that from us we are prepared to welcome him. And whoever fights us, we would fight him until the promise of God comes to pass."

"And what is the promise of God to you?" asked Rustum.

"Paradise for our martyrs and victory for those who live."

Rustum of course was not inclined to listen to such talk from a seemingly wretched person the likes of whom the Persians regarded as barbaric and uncivilized and whom they had conquered and subjugated for centuries.

The Muslim delegation returned to their commanderin-chief. It was clear that war was now inevitable. Sad's eyes filled with tears. He wished that the battle could be delayed a little or indeed that it might have been somewhat earlier. For on this particul ar day he was seriously ill and could hardly move. He was suffering from sciatica and he could not even sit upright for the pain.

Sad knew that this was going to be a bitter, harsh and bloody battle. And for a brief moment he thought, if only... but no! The Messenger of God had taught the Muslims that none of them should say, "If....." To say "If....." implied a lack of will and de termination and wishing that a situation might have been different was not the characteristic of a firm believer. So, despite his illness, Sad got up and stood before his army and addressed them. He began his speech with a verse from the glorious Quran:

"And indeed after having exhorted (man), We have laid it down in all the books of Divine wisdom that My righteous servants shall inherit the earth."
(Surah al-Anbiyaa, 21:1O5).

The address over, Sad performed Salat az-Zuhr with the army. Facing them once again, he shouted the Muslim battle cry "Allahu Akbar" four times and directed the fighters to attack with the words:

"Hayya ala barakatillah Charge, with the blessings of God." Standing in front of his tent, Sad directed his soldiers and spurred them on with shouts of Allahu Akbar (God is Most Great) and La hawla wa la quwwata ilia billah (there is no power or might s ave with God). For four days the battle raged. The Muslims displayed valor and skill. But a Persian elephant corps wrought havoc in the ranks of the Muslims. The ferocious battle was only resolved when several renowned Muslim warriors made a rush in the d irection of the Persian commander. A storm arose and the canopy of Rustam was blown into the river. As he tried to flee he was detected and slain. Complete confusion reigned among the Persians and they fled in disarray.

Just how ferocious the battle was can be imagined when it is known that some thirty thousand persons on both sides fell in the course of four days' fighting. In one day alone, some two thousand Muslims and about ten thousand Persians lost their lives.

The Battle of Qadisiyyah is one of the major decisive battles of world history. It sealed the fate of the Sasanian Empire just as the Battle of Yarmuk had sealed the fate of the Byzantine Empire in the east.

Two years after Qadisiyyah, Sad went on to take the Sasanian capital. By then he had recovered his health. The taking of Ctesiphon was accomplished after a brilliant crossing of the Tigris river while it was in flood. Sad has thus gone down in the annals of history as the Hero of Qadisiyyah and the Conqueror of Ctesiphon.

He lived until he was almost eighty years old. He was blessed with much influence and wealth but as the time of death approached in the year 54 AH, he asked his son to open a box in which he had kept a course woolen jubbah and said: "Shroud me in this, for in this (jubbah) I met the Mushrikin on the day

of Badr and in it I desire to meet God Almighty."

From Alim® Online

Sa'id ibn Aamir Al-Jumahi

Scanned from: Companions of The Prophet Vol.1, By Abdul Wahid Hamid

Sa'id ibn Aamir al-Jumahi was one of thousands who left for the region of Tan'im on the outskirts of Makkah at the invitation of the Quraysh leaders to witness the killing of Khubayb ibn Adiy, one of the companions of Muhammad whom they had captured treacherously.

With his exuberant youthfulness and strength, Sa'id jostled through the crowd until he caught up with the Quraysh leaders, men like Sufyan ibn Harb, and Safwan ibn Umayyah, who were leading the procession.

Now he could see the prisoner of the Quraysh shackled in his chains, the women and children pushing him to the place set for his death. Khubayb's death was to be in revenge for Quraysh losses in the battle of Badr.

When the assembled throng arrived with its prisoner at the appointed place, Sa'id ibn Aamir took up his position at a point directly overlooking Khubayb as he approached the wooden cross. From there he heard Khubayb's firm but quiet voice amid the shouting of women and children.

"If you would, leave me to pray two rakaats before my death ."

This the Quraysh allowed.

Sa'id looked at Khubayb as he faced the Ka'bah and prayed. How beautiful and how composed those two rakaats seemed!

Then he saw Khubayb facing the Quraysh leaders.

"By God, if you thought that I asked to pray out of fear of death, I would think the prayer not worth the trouble," he said.

Sa'id then saw his people set about dismembering Khubayb's body while he was yet alive and taunting him in the process.

"Would you like Muhammad to be in your place while you go free?"

With his blood flowing, he replied, "By God, I would not want to be safe and secure among my family while even a thorn hurts Muhammad."

People shook their fists in the air and the shouting increased.

"Kill him. Kill him!"

Sa'id watched Khubayb lifting his eyes to the heavens above the wooden cross.

"Count them all, O Lord," he said. "Destroy them and let not a single one escape."

Thereafter Sa'id could not count the number of swords and spears which cut through Khubayb's body.

The Quraysh returned to Makkah and in the eventful days that followed forgot Khubayb and his death. But Khubayb was never absent from the thoughts of Sa'id, now approaching manhood. Sa'id would see him in his dreams while asleep and he would picture Khubayb in front of him praying his two rakaats, calm and contented, before the wooden cross. And he would hear the reverberation of Khubayb's voice as he prayed for the punishment of the Quraysh. He would become afraid that a thunderbolt from the sky or some calamity would strike him.

Khubayb, by his death, had taught Sa'id what he did not realize beforeÑthat real life was faith and conviction and struggle in the path of faith, even until death. He taught him also that faith which is deeply ingrained in a person works wonders and performs miracles. He taught him something else tooÑthat the man who is loved by his companions with such a love as Khubayb's could only be a prophet with Divine support.

Thus was Sa'id's heart opened to Islam. He stood up in the assembly of the Quraysh and announced that he was free from their sins and burdens. He renounced their idols and their superstitions and proclaimed his entry into the religion of God.

Sa'id ibn Aamir migrated to Madinah and attached himself to the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him. He took part with the Prophet in the battle of Khaybar and other engagements thereafter. After the Prophet passed away to the protection of his Lord, Sa'id continued active service under his two successors, Abu Bakr and Umar. He lived the unique and exemplary life of the believer who has purchased the Hereafter with this world. He sought the pleasure and blessings of God above selfish desires and bodily pleasures.

Both Abu Bakr and Umar knew Sa'id well for his honesty and piety. They would listen to whatever he had to say and follow his advice. Sa'id once came to Umar at the beginning of his caliphate and said,

"I adjure you to fear God in dealing with people and do not fear people in your relationship with God. Let not your actions deviate from your words for the best of speech is that which is confirmed by action. Consider those who have been appointed over the affairs of Muslims, far and near. Like for them what you like for yourself and your family and dislike for them what you would dislike for yourself and your family. Surmount any obstacles to attain the truth and do not fear the criticisms of those who criticize in matters prescribed by God.

"Who can measure up to this, Sa'id?" asked Umar.

"A man like yourself from among those whom God has appointed over the affairs of the Ummah of Muhammad and who feels responsible to God alone," replied Sa'id.

"Sa'id," he said, "I appoint you to be governor of Homs (in Syria)."

"Umar," pleaded Sa'id, "I entreat you by God, do not cause me to go astray by making me concerned with worldly affairs."

Umar became angry and said, "You have placed the responsibility of the caliphate on me and now you forsake me."

"By God, I shall not forsake you," Sa'id quickly responded.

Umar appointed him as governor of Homs and offered him a gratuity.

"What shall I do with it, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?" asked Sa'id. "The stipend from the bayt al-mal will be more than enough for my needs." With this, he proceeded to Homs.

Not long afterwards, a delegation from Homs made up of people in whom Umar had confidence came to visit him in Madinah. He requested them to write the names of the poor among them so he could relieve their needs. They prepared a list for him in which the name Saiid ibn Aamir appeared.

"Who is this Sa'id ibn Aamir?" asked Umar.

"Our amir," they replied.

"Your amir is poor?" said Umar, puzzled.

"Yes," they affirmed, "By God, several days go by without a fire being lit in his house."

Umar was greatly moved and wept. He got a thousand dinars, put it in a purse and said, "Convey my greetings to him and tell him that the Amir al-Mu'mineen has sent this money to help him look after his needs."

The delegation came to Sa'id with the purse. When he found that it contained money, he began to push it away from him, saying, "From God we are and to Him we shall certainly return."

He said it in such a way as if some misfortune had descended on him. His alarmed wife hurried to him and asked, "What's the matter, Saiid? Has the Khalifah died?"

"Something greater than that."

"Have the Muslims been defeated in a battle?"

"Something greater than that. The world has come upon me to corrupt my hereafter and create disorder in my house."

"Then get rid of it," said she, not knowing anything about the dinars.

"Will you help me in this?" he asked.

She agreed. He took the dinars, put them in bags and distributed them to the Muslim poor.

Not long afterwards, Umar ibn al-Khattab went to Syria to examine conditions there. When he arrived at Homs which was called little Kufah because, like Kufah, its inhabitants complained a lot about their leaders, he asked what they thought of their flair. They complained about him mentioning four of his actions each one more serious than the other.

"I shall bring you and him together," Umar promised. "And I pray to God that my opinion about him would not be damaged. I used to have great confidence in him."

When the meeting was convened, Umar asked what complaints they had against him.

"He only comes out to us when the sun is already high," they said.

"What do you have to say to that, Sa'id?" asked Umar.

Sa'id was silent for a moment, then said, "By God, I really didn't want to say this but there seems to be no way out. My family does not have a home help so I get up every morning and prepare dough for bread. I wait a little until it rises and then bake for them. I then make wads and go out to the people."

"What's your other complaint?" asked Umar.

"He does not answer anyone at night," they said.

To this Sa'id reluctantly said, "By God, I really wouldn't have liked to disclose this also, but I have left the day for them and the night for God, Great and Sublime is He."

"And what's your other complaint about him?" asked Umar.

"He does not come out to us for one day in every month," they said.

To this Sa'id replied, "I do not have a home help, O Amir al-Mu'mineen and I do not have any clothes except what's on me. This I wash once a month and I wait for it to dry. Then I go out in the later part of the day."

"Any other complaint about him?" asked Umar.

"From time to time, he blacks out in meetings," they said.

To this Sa'id replied, "I witnessed the killing of Khubayb ibn Adiy when I was a mushrik. I saw the Quraysh cutting him and saying, "Would you like Muhammad to be in your place?" to which Khubayb replied, "I would not wish to be safe and secure among my family while a thorn hurts Muhammad." By God, whenever I remember that day and how I failed to come to his aid, I only think that God would not forgive me and I black out."

Thereupon Umar said, "Praise be to God. My impression of him has not been tainted." He later sent a thousand dinars to Sa'id to help him out. When his wife saw the amount she said. "Praise be to God Who has enriched us out of your service. Buy some provisions for us and get us a home help."

"Is there any way of spending it better?" asked Sa'id. "Let us spend it on whoever comes to us and we would get something better for it by thus dedicating it to God."

"That will be better," she agreed.

He put the dinars into small bags and said to a member of his family, "Take this to the widow of so and so, and the orphans of that person, to the needy in that family and to the indigent of the family of that person."

Sa'id ibn Aamir al-Jumahi was indeed one of those who deny themselves even when they are afflicted with severe poverty.

Scanned from: Companions of The Prophet Vol.1, By Abdul Wahid Hamid

Said Ibn Zayd

From Alim® Online

Zayd the son of Amr stood away from the Quraysh crowd as they celebrated one of their festivals. Men were dressed in rich turbans of brocade and expensive Yemeni burdabs. Women and children were also exquisitely turned out in their fine clothes and glitte ring jewelry. Zayd watched as sacrificial animals, gaily caparisoned were led out to slaughter before the Quraysh idols. It was difficult for him to remain silent. Leaning against a wall of the Kabah, he shouted:

"O people of Quraysh! It is God Who has created the sheep. He it is Who has sent down rain from the skies of which they drink and He has caused fodder to grow from the earth with which they are fed. Then even so you slaughter them in names other than His. Indeed, I see that you are an ignorant folk."

Zayd's uncle al-Khattab, the father of Umar ibn al-Khattab, seethed with anger. He strode up to Zayd, slapped him on the race and shouted: "Damn you! We still hear from you such stupidity. We have borne it until our patience is exhausted."

Al-Khattab then incited a number of violent people to harass and persecute Zayd and make life extremely uncomfortable for him. These incidents which took place before Muhammad's call to Prophethood gave a foretaste of the bitter conflict that was to take place between the upholders of truth and the stubborn adherents of idolatrous practices. Zayd was one of the few men, known as hanifs, who saw these idolatrous practices for what they were. Not only did he refuse to take part in them himself but he refuse d to eat anything that was sacrificed to idols. He proclaimed that he worshipped the God of Ibrahim and, as the above incident showed, was not afraid to challenge his people in public.

On the other hand, his uncle al-Khattab was a staunch follower of the old pagan ways of the Quraysh and he was shocked by Zayd's public disregard for the gods and goddesses they worshipped. So he had him hounded and persecuted to the point where he was fo rced to leave the valley of Makkah and seek refuge in the surrounding mountains. He even appointed a band of young men whom he instructed not to allow Zayd to approach Makkah and enter the Sanctuary.

Zayd only managed to enter Makkah in secret. There unknown to the Quraysh he met with people like Waraqah ibn Nawfal, Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Uthman ibn al-Harith and Umaymah bint Abdul Muttalib, the paternal aunt of Muhammad ibn Abdullah. They discussed how deeply immersed the Arabs were in their misguided ways. To his friends, Zayd spoke thus: "Certainly, by God, you know that your people have no valid grounds for their beliefs and that they have distorted and transgressed from the religion of Ibrahim. Adop t a religion which you can follow and which can bring you salvation."

Zayd and his companions then went to Jewish rabbis and Christian scholars and people of other communities in an attempt to learn more and go back to the pure religion of Ibrahim.

Of the four persons mentioned, Waraqah ibn Nawfal became a Christian. Abdullah ibn Jahsh and Uthman ibn al-Harith did not arrive at any definite conclusion. Zayd ibn Amr however had quite a different story. Finding it impossible to stay in Makkah, he left the Hijaz and went as far as Mosul in the north of Iraq and from there southwest into Syria. Throughout his journeys, he always questioned monks

and rabbis about the religion of Ibrahim. He found no satisfaction until he came upon a monk in Syria who tol d him that the religion he was seeking did not exist any longer but the time was now near when God would send forth, from his own people whom he had left, a Prophet who would revive the religion of Ibrahim. The monk advised him that should he see this Pro phet he should have no hesitation in recognizing and following him.

Zayd retraced his steps and headed for Makkah intending to meet the expected Prophet. As he was passing through the territory of Lakhm on the southern border of Syria he was attacked by a group of nomad Arabs and killed before he could set eyes on the Mes senger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. However, before he breathed his last, he raised his eyes to the heavens and said:

"O Lord, if You have prevented me from attaining this good, do not prevent my son from doing so."

When Waraqah heard of Zayd's death, he is said to have written an elegy in praise of him. The Prophet also commended him and said that on the day of Resurrection "he will be raised as having, in himself alone, the worth of a whole people".

God, may He be glorified, heard the prayer of Zayd. When Muhammad the Messenger of God rose up inviting people to Islam, his son Said was in the forefront of those who believed in the oneness of God and who affirmed their faith in the prophethood of Muham mad. This is not strange for Said grew up in a household which repudiated the idolatrous ways of the Quraysh and he was instructed by a father who spent his life searching for Truth and who died in its pursuit.

Said was not yet twenty when he embraced Islam. His young and steadfast wife Fatimah, daughter of al-Khattab and sister of Umar, also accepted Islam early. Evidently both Said and Fatimah managed to conceal their acceptance of Islam from the Quraysh and e specially from Fatimah's family for some time. She had cause to fear not only her father but her brother Umar who was brought up to venerate the Kabah and to cherish the unity of the Quraysh and their religion.

Umar was a headstrong young man of great determination. He saw Islam as a threat to the Quraysh and became most violent and unrestrained in his attacks on Muslims. He finally decided that the only way to put an end to the trouble was to eliminate the man who was its cause. Goaded on by blind fury he took up his sword and headed for the Prophet's house. On his way he came face to face with a secret believer in the Prophet who seeing Umar's grim expression asked him where he was going. "I am going to kill M uhammad..."

There was no mistaking his bitterness and murderous resolve. The believer sought to dissuade him from his intent but Umar was deaf to any arguments. He then thought of diverting Umar in order to at least warn the Prophet of his intentions.

"O Umar," he said, "Why not first go back to the people of your own house and set them to rights?"

"What people of my house?" asked Umar.

"Your sister Fatimah and your brother-in-law Said. They have both forsaken your religion and are followers of Muhammad in his religion..."

Umar turned and made straight for his sister's house. There he called out to her angrily as he approached. Khabbab ibn al-Aratt who often came to recite the Quran to Said and Fatimah was with them then. When they heard Umar's voice, Khabbab hid in a corne r of the house and Fatimah concealed

the manuscript. But 'Umar had heard the sound of their reading and when he came in, he said to them: "What is this haynamah (gibbering) I heard?"

They tried to assure him that it was only normal conversation that he had heard but he insisted: "Hear it I did," he said, "and it is possible that you have both become renegades."

"Have you not considered whether the Truth is not to be found in your religion?" said Said to Umar trying to reason with him. Instead, Umar set upon his brother-in-law hitting and kicking him as hard as he could and when Fatimah went to the defence of her husband, Umar struck her a blow on her face which drew blood.

"O Umar," said Fatimah, and she was angry. "What if the Truth is not in your religion! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God."

Fatimah's wound was bleeding, and when Umar saw the blood he was sorry for what he had done. A change came over him and he said to his sister:

"Give me that script which you have that I may read it." Like them Umar could read, but when he asked for the script, Fatimah said to him:

"You are impure and only the pure may touch it. Go and wash yourself or make ablutions."

Thereupon Umar went and washed himself, and she gave him the page on which was written the opening verses of Surah Ta-Ha. He began to read it and when he reached the verse, 'Verily, I alone am God, there no deity but me. So, worship Me alone, and be const ant in Prayer so as to remember Me, 'he said: "Show me where Muhammad is."

Umar then made his way to the house of al-Arqam and declared his acceptance of Islam and the Prophet and all his companions rejoiced.

Said and his wife Fatimah were thus the immediate cause which led to the conversion of the strong and determined Umar and this added substantially to the power and prestige of the emerging faith.

Said ibn Zayd was totally devoted to the Prophet and the service of Islam. He witnessed all the major campaigns and encounters in which the Prophet engaged with the exception of Badr. Before Badr, he and Talhah were sent by the Prophet as scouts to Hawra on the Red Sea coast due west of Madinah to bring him news of a Quraysh caravan returning from Syria. When Talhah and Said returned to Madinah the Prophet had already set out for Badr with the first Muslim army of just over three hundred men.

After the passing away of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, Said continued to play a major role in the Muslim community. He was one of those whom Abu Bakr consulted on his succession and his name is often linked with such companions as U thman, Abu Ubaydah and Sad ibn Abi Waqqas in the campaigns that were waged. He was known for his courage and heroism, a glimpse of which we can get from his account of the Battle of Yarmuk. He said:

"For the Battle of Yarmuk, we were twenty four thousand or thereabout. Against us, the Byzantines mobilized one hundred and twenty thousand men. They advanced towards us with a heavy and thunderous movement as if mountains were being moved. Bishops and p riests strode before them bearing crosses and chanting litanies which were repeated by the soldiers behind them.

When the Muslims saw them mobilized thus, they became worried by their vast numbers and something of anxiety and fear entered theft hearts. Thereupon,

Abu Ubaydah stood before the Muslims and urged them to fight. "Worshippers of God" he said, "help God and God will help you and make your feet firm."

"Worshippers of God, be patient and steadfast for indeed patience and steadfastness (sabr) is a salvation from unbelief, a means of attaining the pleasure of God and a defence against ignominy and disgrace."

"Draw out your spears and protect yourselves with your shields. Don't utter anything among yourselves but the remembrance of God Almighty until I give you the command, if God wills."

"Thereupon a man emerged from the ranks of the Muslims and said: "I have resolved to die this very hour. Have you a message to send to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace?"

"Yes" replied Abu Ubaydah, "convey salaam to him from me and from the Muslims and say to him: O Messenger of God, we have found true what our Lord has promised us."

"As soon as I heard the man speak and saw him unsheathe his sword and go out to meet the enemy, I threw myself on the ground and crept on all fours and with my spear I felled the first enemy horseman racing towards us. Then I fell upon the enemy and God r emoved from my heart all traces of fear. The Muslims engaged the advancing Byzantines and continued fighting until they were blessed with victory."

Said was ranked by the Prophet as one of the outstanding members of his generation. He was among ten of the companions whom the Prophet visited one day and promised Paradise. These were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awl, Abu Ubaydah , Talhah, az-Zubayr, Sad of Zuhrah, and Said the son of Zayd the Hanif. The books of the Prophet's sayings have recorded his great praises of the Promised Ten (al-'asharatu-l mubashshirun) and indeed of others whom on other occasions he also gave good tid ings of Paradise.

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Salim Mawla Abi Hudhayfah

From Alim® Online

In giving advice to his companions, the noble Prophet, peace be on him, once said: "Learn the Quran from four persons: Abdullah ibn Masud, Salim Mawla Abi Hudhayfah, Ubayy ibn Kab and Muadh ibn Jabal."

We have read about three of these companions before. But who was this fourth companion in whom the Prophet had so much confidence that he considered him a hujjah or competent authority to teach the Quran and be a source of reference for it?

Salim was a slave and when he accepted Islam he was adopted as a son by a Muslim who was formerly a leading nobleman of the Quraysh. When the practice of adoption (in which the adopted person was called the son of his adopted father) was banned, Salim sim ply became a brother, a companion and a mawla (protected person) of the one who had adopted him, Abu Hudhayfah ibn Utbah. Through the blessings of Islam, Salim rose to a position of high esteem among the Muslims by virtue of his noble conduct and his piet y.

Both Salim and Abu Hudhayfah accepted Islam early. Abu Hudhayfah himself did so in the face of bitter opposition from his father, the notorious Utbah ibn Rabi'ah who was particularly virulent in his attacks against the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his companions.

When the verse of the Quran was revealed abolishing adoption, people like Zayd and Salim had to change their names. Zayd who was known as Zayd ibn Muhammad had to be called after his own natural father. Henceforth he was known as Zayd ibn Harithah. Sali m however did not know the name of his father. Indeed he did not know who his father was. However he remained under the protection of Abu Hudhayfah and so came to be known as Salim Mawla Abi Hudhayfah.

In abolishing the practice of adoption, Islam wanted to emphasize the bonds and responsibilities of natural kinship. However, no relationship was greater or stronger than the bond of Islam and the ties of faith which was the basis of brotherhood. The ea rly Muslims understood this very well. There was nobody dearer to anyone of them after Allah and His Messenger than their brethren in faith.

We have seen how the Ansar of Madinah welcomed and accepted the Muhajirin from Makkah and shared with them their homes and their wealth and their hearts. This same spirit of brotherhood we see in the relationship between the Quraysh aristocrat, Abu Hudhay fah, and the despised and lowly slave, Salim. They remained to the very end of their lives something more than brothers; they died together, one body beside the other one soul with the other. Such was the unique greatness of Islam. Ethnic background and s ocial standing had no worth in the sight of God. Only faith and taqwa mattered as the verses of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet emphasized over and over again:

"The most honorable of you in the sight of God, is the most God-fearing of you," says the Quran.

"No Arab has an advantage over a non-Arab except in taqwa (piety)," taught the noble Prophet who also

said: "The son of a white woman has no advantage over the son of a black woman except in taqwa."

In the new and just society rounded by Islam, Abu Hudhayfah found honor for himself in protecting the one who was a slave.

In this new and rightly-guided society rounded by Islam, which destroyed unjust class divisions and false social distinctions Salim found himself, through his honesty, his faith and his willingness to sacrifice, in the front line of the believers. He was the "imam" of the Muhajirin from Makkah to Madinah, leading them in Salat in the masjid at Quba which was built by the blessed hands of the Prophet himself. He became a competent authority in the Book of God so much so that the Prophet recommended that t he Muslims learn the Quran from him. Salim was even further blessed and enjoyed a high estimation in the eyes of the Prophet, peace be on him, who said of him.

"Praise be to God Who has made among my Ummah such as you."

Even his fellow Muslim brothers used to call him "Salim min as-Salihin - Salim one of the righteous". The story of Salim is like the story of Bilal and that of tens of other slaves and poor persons whom Islam raised from slavery and degradation and 'made them, in the society of guidance and justice - imams, leaders and military commanders.

Salim's personality was shaped by Islamic virtues. One of these was his outspokenness when he felt it was his duty to speak out especially when a wrong was committed.

A well-known incident to illustrate this occurred after the liberation of Makkah. The Prophet sent some of his companions to the villages and tribes around the city. He specified that they were being sent as du'at to invite people to Islam and not as figh ters. Khalid ibn al-Walid was one of those sent out. During the mission however, to settle an old score from the days of Jahiliyyah, he fought with and killed a man even though the man testified that he was now a Muslim.

Accompanying Khalid on this mission was Salim and others. As soon as Salim saw what Khalid had done he went up to him and reprimanded him listing the mistakes he had committed. Khalid, the great leader and military commander both during the days of Jahil iyyah and now in Islam, was silent for once.

Khalid then tried to defend himself with increasing fervor. But Salim stood his ground and stuck to his view that Khalid had committed a grave error. Salim did not look upon Khalid then as an abject slave would look upon a powerful Makkan nobleman. Not a t all. Islam had placed them on an equal footing. It was justice and truth that had to be defended. He did not look upon him as a leader whose mistakes were to be covered up or justified but rather as an equal partner in carrying out a responsibility and an obligation. Neither did he come out in opposition to Khalid out of prejudice or passion but out of sincere advice and mutual self-criticism which Islam has hallowed. Such mutual sincerity was repeatedly emphasized by the Prophet himself when he said:< P> "Ad-dinu an-Nasihah. Ad-din u an-Nasihah. Ad-din u an-Nasihah." "Religion is sincere advice. Religion is sincere advice. Religion is sincere advice."

When the Prophet heard what Khalid had done, he was deeply grieved and made long and fervent supplication to his Lord. "O Lord," he said, "I am innocent before you of what Khalid has done." And he asked: "Did anyone reprimand him?"

The Prophet's anger subsided somewhat when he was told:

"Yes, Salim reprimanded him and opposed him." Salim lived close to the Prophet and the believers. He was never slow or reluctant in his worship nor did he miss any campaign. In particular, the strong brotherly relationship which existed between him and Ab u Hudhayfah grew with the passing days.

The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, passed away to his Lord. Abu Bakr assumed responsibility for the affairs of Muslims and immediately had to face the conspiracies of the apostates which resulted in the terrible battle of Yamamah. Among t he Muslim forces which made their way to the central heartlands of Arabia was Salim and his "brother", Abu Hudhayfah.

At the beginning of the battle, the Muslim forces suffered major reverses. The Muslims fought as individuals and so the strength that comes from solidarity was initially absent. But Khalid ibn al-Walid regrouped the Muslim forces anew and managed to achie ve an amazing coordination.

Abu Hudhayfah and Salim embraced each other and made a vow to seek martyrdom in the path of the religion of Truth and thus attain felicity in the hereafter. Yamamah was their tryst with destiny. To spur on the Muslims Abu Hudhayfah shouted: "Yaa ahl al-Qu ran - O people of the Quran! Adorn the Quran with your deeds," as his sword flashed through the army of Musaylamah the imposter like a whirlwind. Salim in his turn shouted:

"What a wretched bearer of the Quran am I, if the Muslims are attacked from my direction. Far be it from you, O Salim! Instead, be you a worthy bearer of the

With renewed courage he plunged into the battle. When the standard-bearer of the Muhajirin, Zayd ibn al-Khattab, fell. Salim bore aloft the flag and continued fighting. His right hand was then severed and he held the standard aloft with his left hand whi le reciting aloud the verse of the glorious Quran:

"How many a Prophet fought in God's way and with him (fought) large bands of godly men! But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in God's way, nor did they weaken (in will) nor give in. And God loves those who are firm and steadfast." What an i nspiring verse for such an occasion! And what a fitting epitaph for someone who had dedicated his life for the sake of Islam!

A wave of apostates then overwhelmed Salim and he fell. Some life remained with him until the battle came to an end with the death of Musaylamah. When the Muslims went about searching for their victims and their martyrs, they found Salim in the last thro es of death. As his life-blood ebbed away he asked them: "What has happened to Abu Hudhayfah?" "He has been martyred," came the reply. "Then put me to lie next to him," said Salim.

"He is close to you, Salim. He was martyred in this same place." Salim smiled a last faint smile and spoke no more. Both men had realized what they had hoped for. Together they entered Islam. Together they lived. And together they were martyred.

Salim, that great believer passed away to his Lord. Of him, the great Umar ibn al-Khattab spoke as he lay dying: "If Salim were alive, I would have appointed him my successor."

Salman al-Farsi

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

This is a story of a seeker of Truth, the story of Salman the Persian, gleaned, to begin with, from his own words:

I grew up in the town of Isfahan in Persia in the village of Jayyan. My father was the Dihqan or chief of the village. He was the richest person there and had the biggest house.

Since I was a child my father loved me, more than he loved any other. As time went by his love for me became so strong and overpowering that he feared to lose me or have anything happen to me. So he kept me at home, a veritable prisoner, in the same way that young girls were kept.

I became devoted to the Magian religion so much so that I attained the position of custodian of the fire which we worshipped. My duty was to see that the flames of the fire remained burning and that it did not go out for a single hour, day or night.

My father had a vast estate which yielded an abundant supply of crops. He himself looked after the estate and the harvest. One day he was very busy with his duties as dihqan in the village and he said to me:

"My son, as you see, I am too busy to go out to the estate now. Go and look after matters there for me today."

On my way to the estate, I passed a Christian church and the voices at prayer attracted my attention. I did not know anything about Christianity or about the followers of any other religion throughout the time my father kept me in the house away from people. When I heard the voices of the Christians I entered the church to see what they were doing.

I was impressed by their manner of praying and felt drawn to their religion. "By God," I said, "this is better than ours. I shall not leave them until the sun sets."

I asked and was told that the Christian religion originated in AshSham (Greater Syria). I did not go to my father's estate that day and at night, I returned home. My father met me and asked what I had done. I told him about my meeting with the Christians and how I was impressed by their religion. He was dismayed and said:

"My son, there is nothing good in that religion. Your religion and the religion of your forefathers is better."

"No, their religion is better than ours," I insisted.

My father became upset and afraid that I would leave our religion. So he kept me locked up in the house and put a chain on my feet. I managed however to send a message to the Christians asking them to

inform me of any caravan going to Syria. Before long they got in touch with me and told me that a caravan was headed for Syria. I managed to unfetter myself and in disguise accompanied the caravan to Syria. There, I asked who was the leading person in the Christian religion and was directed to the bishop of the church. I went up to him and said:

"I want to become a Christian and would like to attach myself to your service, learn from you and pray with you."

The bishop agreed and I entered the church in his service. I soon found out, however, that the man was corrupt. He would order his followers to give money in chanty while holding out the promise of blessings to them. When they gave anything to spend in the way oRGod however, he would hoard it for himself and not give anything to the poor or needy. In this way he amassed a vast quantity of gold. When the bishop died and the Christians gathered to bury him, I told them of his corrupt practices and, at their request, showed them where he kept their donations. When they saw the large jars filled with gold and silver they said.

"By God, we shall not bury him." They nailed him on a cross and threw stones at him.

I continued in the service of the person who replaced him. The new bishop was an ascetic who longed for the Hereafter and engaged in worship day and night. I was greatly devoted to him and spent a long time in his company.

(After his death, Salman attached himself to various Christian religious figures, in Mosul, Nisibis and elsewhere. The last one had told him about the appearance of a Prophet in the land of the Arabs who would have a reputation for strict honesty, one who would accept a gift but would never consume charity (sadaqah) for himself. Salman continues his story.)

A group of Arab leaders from the Kalb tribe passed through Ammuriyah and I asked them to take me with them to the land of the Arabs in return for whatever money I had. They agreed and I paid them. When we reached Wadi al-Qura (a place between Madinah and Syria), they broke their agreement and sold me to a Jew. I worked as a servant for him but eventually he sold me to a nephew of his belonging to the tribe of Banu Qurayzah. This nephew took me with him to Yathrib, the city of palm groves, which is how th e Christian at Ammuriyah had described it.

At that time the Prophet was inviting his people in Makkah to Islam but I did not hear anything about him then because of the harsh duties which slavery imposed upon me.

When the Prophet reached Yathrib after his hijrah from Makkah, I was in fact at the top of a palm tree belonging to my master doing some work. My master was sitting under the tree. A nephew of his came up and said:

"May God declare war on the Aws and the Khazraj (the two main Arab tribes of Yathrib). By God, they are now gathering at Quba to meet a man who has today come from Makkah and who claims he is a Prophet." I felt hot flushes as soon as I heard these words and I began to shiver so violently that I was afraid that I might fall on my master. I quickly got down from the tree and spoke to my master's nephew. "What did you say? Repeat the news for me."

My mastcr was very angry and gave me a terrible blow. "What does this matter to you? Go back to what you were doing," he shouted.

That evening, I took some dates that I had gathered and went to the place where the Prophet had alighted. I went up to him and said:

"I have heard that you are a righteous man and that you have companions with you who are strangers and are in need. Here is something from me as sadaqah. I see that you are more deserving of it than others."

The Prophet ordered his companions to eat but he himself did not eat of it.

I gathered some more dates and when the Prophet left Quba for Madinah I went to him and said: "I noticed that you did not eat of the sadaqah I gave. This however is a gift for you." Of this gift of dates, both he and his companions ate.

The strict honesty of the Prophet was one of the characteristics that led Salman to believe in him and accept Islam.

Salman was released from slavery by the Prophet who paid his Jewish slave-owner a stipulated price and who himself planted an agreed number of date palms to secure his manumission. After accepting Islam, Salman would say when asked whose son he was:

"I am Salman, the son of Islam from the children of Adam."

Salman was to play an important role in the struggles of the growing Muslim state. At the battle of Khandaq, he proved to be an innovator in military strategy. He suggested digging a ditch or khandaq around Madinah to keep the Quraysh army at bay. When Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Makkans, saw the ditch, he said, "This strategem has not been employed by the Arabs before."

Salman became known as "Salman the Good". He was a scholar who lived a rough and ascetic life. He had one cloak which he wore and on which he slept. He would not seek the shelter of a roof but stayed under a tree or against a wall. A man once said to him: "Shall I not build you a house in which to live?" "I have no need of a house," he replied.

The man persisted and said, "I know the type of house that would suit you." "Describe it to me," said Salman.

"I shall build you a house which if you stand up in it, its roof will hurt your head and if you stretch your legs the wall will hurt them."

Later, as a govenor of al-Mada'in (Ctesiphon) near Baghdad, Salman received a stipend of five thousand dirhams. This he would distribute as sadaqah. He lived from the work of his own hands. When some people came to Mada'in and saw him working in the palm groves, they said, "You are the amir here and your sustenance is guaranteed and you do this work!"

"I like to eat from the work of my own hands," he replied. Salman however was not extreme in his asceticism. It is related that he once visited Abu ad-Dardaa with whom the Prophet had joined him in brotherhood. He found Abu adDardaa's wife in a miserable state and he asked, "What is the matter with you."

"Your brother has no need of anything in this world*" she replied.

When Abu ad-Dardaa came, he welcomed Salman and gave him food. Salman told him to eat but Abu adDardaa said, "I am fasting."

"I swear to you that I shall not eat until you eat also."

Salman spent the night there as well. During the night, Abu ad-Dardaa got up but Salman got hold of him and said:

"O Abu ad-Dardaa, your Lord has a right over you. Your family have a right over you and your body has a right over you. Give to each its due."

In the morning, they prayed together and then went out to meet the Prophet, peace be upon him. The Prophet supported Salman in what he had said.

As a scholar, Salman was noted for his vast knowledge and wisdom. Ali said of him that he was like Luqman the Wise. And Ka'b al-Ahbar said: "Salman is stuffed with knowledge and wisdomÑan ocean that does not dry up." Salman had a knowledge of both the Christian scriptures and the Qur'an in addition to his earlier knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion. Salman in fact translated parts of the Qur'an into Persian during the life-time of the Prophet. He was thus the first person to translate the Qur'an into a foreign language.

Salman, because of the influential household in which he grew up, might easily have been a major figure in the sprawling Persian Empire of his time. His search for truth however led him, even before the Prophet had appeared, to renounce a comfortable and affluent life and even to suffer the indignities of slavery. According to the most reliable account, he died in the year thirty five after the hijrah, during the caliphate of Uthman, at Ctesiphon.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Suhayb Ar-Rumi

From Alim® Online

About twenty years before the start of the Prophet's mission, that is about the middle of the sixth century CE, an Arab named Sinan ibn Malik governed the city of al-Uballah on behalf of the Persian emperor. The city, which is now part of Basrah, lay on t he banks of the Euphrates River. Sinan lived in a luxurious palace on the banks of the river. He had several children and was particularly fond of one of them who was then barely five years old. His name was Suhayb. He was blond and fair-complexioned. H e was active and alert and gave much pleasure to his father.

One day Suhayb's mother took him and some members of her household to a village called ath-Thani for a picnic. What was to be a relaxing and enjoyable day turned out to be a terrifying experience that was to change the course of young Suhayb's life forev er.

That day, the village of ath-Thani was attacked, by a raiding party of Byzantine soldiers. The guards accompanying the picnic party were overwhelmed and killed. Ali possessions were seized and a large number of persons were taken prisoner. Among these w as Suhayb ibn Sinan.

Suhayb was taken to one of the slave markets of the Byzantine Empire, the capital of which was Constantinople, there to be sold. Thereafter he passed from the hands of one slave master to another. His fate was no different from thousands of other slaves w ho filled the houses, the palaces and castles of Byzantine rulers and aristocrats.

Suhayb spent his boyhood and his youth as a slave. For about twenty years he stayed in Byzantine lands. This gave him the opportunity to get a rare knowledge and understanding of Byzantine/ire and society. In the palaces of the aristocracy, he saw with hi s own eyes the injustices and the corruption of Byzantine life. He detested that society and later would say to himself:

"A society like this can only be purified by a deluge." Suhayb of course grew up speaking Greek, the language of the Byzantine Empire. He practically forgot Arabic. But he never forgot that he was a son of the desert. He longed for the day when he woul d be free again to join his people's folk. At the first opportunity Suhayb escaped from bondage and headed straight for Makkah which was a place of refuge or asylum. There people called him Suhayb "ar-Rumi" or "the Byzantine" because of his peculiarly hea vy speech and his blond hair. He became the halif of one of the aristocrats of Makkah, Abdullah ibn Judan. He engaged in trade and prospered. In fact, he became quite rich.

One day he returned to Makkah from one of his trading journeys. He was told that Muhammad the son of Abdullah had begun calling people to believe in God alone, commanding them to be just and to do good works and prohibiting them from shameful and reprehen sible deeds. He immediately enquired who Muhammad was and where he stayed. He was told.

"(He stays) in the house or' al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam. Be careful however that no Quraysh sees you. If they see you they would do (the most terrible things to you). You are a stranger here and there is no bond of asabiyyahi to protect you, neither have you any clan to help you."

Suhayb went cautiously to the house of al-Arqam. At the door he found Ammar ibn Yasir the young son

of a Yemeni father who was known to him. He hesitated for a moment then went up to Ammar and said:

"What do you want (here), Ammar?"

"Rather, what do you want here'?" countered Ammar.

"I want to go to this man and hear directly from him what he is saying."

"I also want to do that." "Then let us enter together, ala barakatillah (with the blessings of God)."

Suhayb and Ammar entered and listened to what Muhammad was saying. They were both readily convinced of the truth of his message. The light of faith entered their hearts. At this meeting, they pledged fealty to the Prophet. declaring that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. They spent the entire day in the company of the noble Prophet. At night, under cover of darkness, they left the house of al-Arqam, their hearts aglow with the light of faith and their faces beaming with ha ppiness.

Then the familiar pattern of events followed. The idolatrous Quraysh learnt about Suhayb's acceptance of Islam and began harassing and persecuting him. Suhayb bore his share of the persecution in the same way as Bilal, Ammar and his mother Sumayyah, Kha bbab and many others who professed Islam. The punishment was inhuman and severe but Suhayb bore it all with a patient and courageous heart because he knew that the path to Jannah is paved with thorns and difficulties. The teachings of the noble Prophet ha d instilled in him and other companions a rare strength and courage.

When the Prophet gave permission for his followers to migrate to Madinah, Suhayb resolved to go in the company of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. The Quraysh however found out about his intentions and foiled his plans. They placed guards over him to prevent him from leaving and taking with him the wealth, the gold and the silver, which he had acquired through trade.

After the departure of the Prophet and Abu Bakr, Suhayb continued to bide his time, waiting for an opportunity to join them. He remained unsuccessful. The eyes of his guards were ever alert and watchful. The only way out was to resort to a stratagem.

One cold night, Suhayb pretended he had some stomach problems and went out repeatedly as if responding to calls of nature. His captors said one to another:

"Don't worry. Al-Laat and al-Uzza are keeping him busy with his stomach."

They became relaxed and sleep got the better of them. Suhayb quietly slipped out as if he was going to the toilet. He armed himself, got ready a mount and headed in the direction of Madinah.

When his captors awoke, they realized with a start that Suhayb was gone. They got horses ready and set out in hot pursuit and eventually caught up with him. Seeing them approach, Suhayb clambered up a hill. Holding his bow and arrow at the ready, he shou ted:

"Men of Quraysh! You know, by God, that I am one of the best archers and my aim is unerring. By God, if you come near me, with each arrow I have, I shall kill one of you. Then I shall strike with my sword."

A Quraysh spokesman responded: By God , we shall not let you escape from us with your life and money. You came to Makkah weak and poor and you have acquired what you have acquired.."

"What would you say if I leave you my wealth?" interrupted Suhayb. "Would you get out of my way?"

"Yes," they agreed.

Suhayb described the place in his house in Makkah where he had left the money, and they allowed him to go.

He set off as quickly as he could for Madinah cherishing the prospect of being with the Prophet and of having the freedom to worship God in peace. On his way to Madinah, whenever he felt tired, the thought of meeting the Prophet sustained him and he proce eded with increased determination. When Suhayb reached Quba, just outside Madinah where the Prophet himself alighted after his Hijrah, the Prophet saw him approaching. He was over-joyed and greeted Suhayb with beaming smiles.

"Your transaction has been fruitful, O Abu Yahya. Your transaction has been fruitful." He repeated this three times. Suhayb's face beamed with happiness as he said: "By God, no one has come before me to you, Messenger of God, and only JibriI could have t old you about this." Yes indeed! Suhayb's transaction was fruitful. Revelation from on high affirmed the truth of this:

"And there is a type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of God. And God is full of kindness to His servants."
(The Quran, Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2O7).

What is money and what is gold and what is the entire world so long as faith remains! The Prophet loved Suhayb a great deal. He was commended by the Prophet and described as preceding the Byzantines to Islam. In addition to his piety and sobriety, Suhayb was also light-hearted at times and had a good sense of humor. One day the Prophet saw him eating dates. He noticed that Suhayb had an infection in one eye. The Prophet said to him laughingly: "Do you eat ripe dates while you have an infection in one eye ?"

"What's wrong?" replied Suhayb, "I am eating it with the other eye."

Suhayb was also known for his generosity. He used to give all his stipend from the public treasury fi sabilillah, to help the poor and those in distress. He was a good example of the Quranic verse: "He gives food for the love of God to the needy, the orph an and the captive." So generous was he that Umar once remarked:

"I have seen you giving out so much food that you appear to be too extravagant." Suhayb replied: "I have heard the Messenger of God say: 'The best of you is the one who gives out food.'"

Suhayb's piety and his standing among MusIims was so high that he was selected by Umar ibn al-Khattab to lead the Muslims in the period between his death and the choosing of his successor.

As he lay dying after he was stabbed by a Magian, Abu Lulu, while leading the Fajr Salat, Umar summoned six of the companions: Uthman, Ali, Talhah, Zubayr, Abdur Rahman ibn Awl, and Sad ibn Abi Waqqas. He did not appoint anyone of them as his successor , because if he had done so according to one report "there would have been for a short time two Khalifahs looking at each other". He instructed the six to consult among themselves and with the Muslims for three days and choose a successor, and then he sai d:

"Wa-l yusalli bi-n nas Suhayb - Let Suhayb lead the people in Salat."

In the period when there was no Khalifah, Suhayb was given the responsibility and the honor of leading the Salat and of being, in other words, the head of the Muslim community.

Suhayb's appointment by Umar showed how well people from a wide variety of backgrounds were integrated and honoured in the community of Islam. Once during the time of the Prophet, a hypocrite named Qays ibn Mutatiyah tried to pour scorn and disgrace on se ctions of the community. Qays had come upon a study circle (halqah) in which were Salman al-Farsi, Suhayb ar-Rumi and Bilal al-Habashi, may God be pleased with them, and remarked:

"The Aws and the Khazraj have stood up m defence of this man (Muhammad). And what are these people doing with him'?" Muadh was furious and informed the Prophet of what Qays had said. The Prophet was very angry. He entered the mosque and the Call to Prayer was given, for this was the method of summoning the Muslims for an important announcement. Then he stood up, praised and glorified God and said:

"Your Lord is One. Your ancestor is one. Your religion is one. Take heed. Arabism is not conferred on you through your mother or father. It is through the tongue (i.e. the language of Arabic), so whoever speaks Arabic, he is an Arab."

From Alim® Online

Suhayl Ibn Amr

At the Battle of Badr, when Suhayl fell into the hands of the Muslims as a prisoner, Umar ibn al-Khattab came up to the Prophet and said: "Messenger of God! Let me pull out the two middle incisors of Suhayl ibn Amr so that he would not stand up and be able to speak out against you after this day."

"Certainly not, Umar," cautioned the Prophet. "I would not mutilate anyone lest God mutilate me even though I am a Prophet." And calling Umar closer to him, the blessed Prophet said:

"Umar, perhaps Suhayl will do something in the future which will please you."

Suhayl ibn Amr was a prominent person among the Quraysh. He was clever and articulate and his opinion carried weight among his people. He was known as the khatib or spokesman and orator of the Quraysh. He was to play a major role in concluding the famous truce of Hudaybiyyah.

Towards the end of the sixth year after the Hijrah, the Prophet and about fifteen hundred of his Sahabah left Madinah for Makkah to perform Umrah. To make it known that they were coming in peace, the Muslims were not armed for battle and carried only their travellers swords. They also took with them animals for sacrifice to let it be known that they were really coming on pilgrimage.

The Quraysh learnt of their approach and immediately prepared to do battle with them. They vowed to themselves that they would never allow the Muslims to enter Makkah. Khalid ibn al-Walid was despatched at the head of a Quraysh cavalry force to cut off the approaching Muslims. Khalids army stood waiting for them at a place called Kara al-Ghamim.

The Prophet learnt in advance of Khalid's position. Although committed to the struggle against them, he was keen not to have any encounter then with the Quraysh forces. He asked: "Is there any man who could take us (to Makkah) on a different route to avoid the Quraysh?"

A man from the Aslam tribe said he could and took the Muslims through the difficult terrain of Warah and then on fairly easy marches, finally approaching Makkah from the south. Khalid realized what the Muslims had done and returned frustrated to Makkah.

The Prophet camped near Hudaybiyyah and indicated that if the Quraysh would give any hint of a truce out of veneration for the sacred time and place, he would respond. The Quraysh sent Badil ibn Warqa with a group of men from the Khuzaah tribe to find out why the Muslims had come. Badil met the Prophet and when he returned to the Quraysh and informed them of the peaceful intentions of the Prophet and his companions, they did not believe him because they said he was from the Khuzaah who were allies of Muhammad. "Does Muhammad intend," they asked, "to come upon us with his soldiers (in the guise of) performing Umrah? The Arabs would hear that he moved against us and entered Makkah by force white a state of war existed between us. By God this will never happen with our approval."

The Quraysh then sent Halis ibn Alqamah, the chieftain of the Ahabish who were allies of the Quraysh. When the Prophet, peace be on him, saw Halis he said, "This man is from a people who think greatly of

animal sacrifice. Drive the sacrificial animals in full view of him so that he can see them. This was done and Halis was greeted by the Muslims chanting the talbiyyah: "Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk." On his return, Halis exclaimed: "Subhana Allah - Glory be to God. These people should not be prevented from entering Makkah. Can lepers and donkeys perform the Hajj while the son of alMuttaIib (Muhammad) be prevented from (visiting) the House of God? By the Lord of the Kabah, may the Quraysh be destroyed. These people have come to perform Umrah."

When the Quraysh heard these words, they scoffed at him: "Sit down! You are only a nomad Arab. You have no knowledge of plots and intrigues."

Urwah ibn Masud, the Thaqafi chieftain from Tail, was then sent out to assess the situation. He said to the Prophet: "O Muhammad! You have gathered all these people and have come back to your birthplace. The Quraysh have come out and pledged to God that you would not enter Makkah against them by force. By God, all these people might well desert you." At that Abu Bakr went up to Urwah and said with disdain: "We desert him (Muhammad)? Woe to you."

As Urwah was speaking, he touched the Prophet's

beard and Mughirah ibn Shubah rapped his hand saying, "Take away your hand," and Urwah retorted: "Woe to you! How crude and coarse you are." The Prophet smiled. "Who is this man, O Muhammad?" asked Urwah. "This is your cousin, Al-Mughirah ibn Shubah." "What perfidy!" Urwah hissed at Al-Mughirah and continued to insult him.

Urwah then surveyed the companions of the Prophet. He saw that whenever he gave them an order, they hastened to carry it out. When he made ablutions they vied with one another to help him. When they spoke in his presence, they lowered their voices, and they did not look him in the eye out of respect for him.

Back with the Quraysh, Urwah showed that he was obviously impressed: "By God, O people of the Quraysh, I have been to Chosroes in his kingdom and I have seen Caesar the Byzantine emperor in the plenitude of his power, but never have I seen a king among his people like Muhammad among his companions. I have seen a people who would not abandon him for anything. Reconsider your position. He is presenting you with right guidance. Accept what he has presented to you. I advise you sincerely... I fear that you will never gain victory over him."

"Don't speak like that," said the Quraysh. "We will have him go back this year and he can return in the future." Meanwhile, the Prophet summoned Uthman ibn Affan and sent him to the Quraysh leaders to inform them of his purpose in coming to Makkah and to ask their permission for the MusIims to visit their relatives. Uthman was also to cheer up the Mustadafin among the Muslims who still lived in Makkah and inform them that liberation would not be long in coming...

Uthman delivered the Prophet's message to the Quraysh and they repeated their determination not to allow the Prophet to enter Makkah. They suggested that Uthman could make tawaf around the Kabah but he replied that he would not make tawaf while the Messenger of God was prevented from doing so. They then took Uthman into custody and a rumor spread that he was killed. When the Prophet heard this, his attitude changed.

"We shall not depart," he said, "until we fight." He summoned the Muslims to take bayah, an oath of allegiance, to fight. The herald cried out: "O people, al-bayah, al-bayah." They flocked to the Prophet as he sat under a tree and swore allegiance to him that they would fight. Soon after however, the Prophet

ascertained that the rumor was false.

It was at this point that the Quraysh sent Suhayl ibn Amr to the Messenger of God with the brief to negotiate and persuade the Prophet to return to Madinah without entering Makkah. Suhayl was chosen no doubt because of his persuasiveness, his toughness and his alertness major qualities of a good negotiator. When the Prophet saw Suhayl approaching, he immediately guessed the change in the position of the Quraysh. "The people want reconciliation. That's why they have sent this man."

The talks between the Prophet and Suhayl continued for long until finally agreement was reached in principle. Umar and others were very upset with the terms of the agreement which they considered to be harmful to the cause of Islam and a defeat for the Muslims. The Prophet assured them that this was not the case and that he would never go against the command of God and that God would not neglect him. He then called Ali ibn Abi Talib to write down the terms of the treaty: "Write: Bismillahi-r Rahmani-r Rahim." "I don't know this (phrase)", interjected Suhayl. "Write instead 'Bismika Allahumma - In Your name, O Allah."

The Prophet conceded and instructed Ali to write 'Bismika Allahumma.' He then said: "Write: 'This is what has been agreed between Muhammad the Messenger of God and Suhayl ibn Amr..." Suhayl objected: "If I had testified that you were indeed the Messenger of God, I would not be fighting you. Write instead you name and the name of your father." So the Prophet again conceded this and instructed Ali to write: 'This is what has been agreed upon by Muhammad the son of Abdullah and Suhayl ibn Amr. They have agreed to suspend war for ten years in which people would enjoy security and would refrain from (harming) one another. Also, that whoever from among the Quraysh should come to Muhammad without the permission of his wali (legal guardian), Muhammad would send him back to them and that if any who is with Muhammad should come to the Quraysh, they would not send him back to him.

Suhayl had managed to save the Makkans face. He had attempted to and got as much as possible for the Quraysh in the negotiations. Of course he was assisted in this by the noble tolerance of the Prophet.

Two years of the Hudaybiyyah treaty elapsed during which the Muslims enjoyed a respite from the Quraysh and were freed to concentrate on other matters. In the eighth year after the Hijrah however the Quraysh broke the terms of the treaty by supporting the Banu Bakr in a bloody aggression against the Khuzaah who had chosen to be allies of the Prophet.

The Prophet took the opportunity to march on Makkah but his object was not revenge. Ten thousand Muslims converged on Makkah reaching there in the month of Ramadan. The Quraysh realized that there was no hope of resisting let alone of defeating the Muslim forces. They were completely at the mercy of the Prophet. What was to be their fate, they who had harried and persecuted the Muslims, tortured and boycotted them, driven them out of their hearths and homes, stirred up others against them, made war on them?

The city surrendered to the Prophet. He received the leaders of the Quraysh in a spirit of tolerance and magnanimity. In a voice full of compassion and tenderness he asked: "O people of the Quraysh! What do you think I will do with you?" Thereupon, the adversary of Islam of yesterday, Suhayl ibn Amr, replied: "We think (you will treat us) well, noble brother, son of a noble brother. ". "A radiant smile flashed across the lips of the beloved of God as he said: "Idhhabu... wa antum at-tulaqaa. Go, for you are free."

At this moment of unsurpassed compassion, nobility and greatness, all the emotions of Suhayl ibn Amr

were shaken and he announced his Islam or submission to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. His acceptance of Islam at that particular time was not the Islam of a defeated man passively giving himself up to his fate. It was instead, as his later life was to demonstrate, the Islam of a man whom the greatness of Muhammad and the greatness of the religion he proclaimed had captivated.

Those who became Muslims on the day Makkah was liberated were given the name "At-Tulaqaa" or the free ones. They realized how fortunate they were and many dedicated themselves in sincere worship and sacrifice to the service of the religion which they had resisted for years. Among the most prominent of these was Suhayl ibn Amr.

Islam moulded him anew. Ali his earlier talents were now burnished to a fine excellence. To these he added new talents and placed them all in the service of truth, goodness and faith. The qualities and practices for which he became known can be described in a few words: kindness, generosity, frequent Salat, fasting, recitation of the Quran, weeping for the fear of God. This was the greatness of Suhayl. In spite of his late acceptance of Islam, he was transformed into a selfless worshipper and a fighting fidai in the path of God.

When the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, passed away, the news quickly reached Makkah, where Suhayl was still resident. The Muslims were plunged into a state of confusion and dismay just as in Madinah. In Madinah, Abu Bakr, may God be pleased with him, quelled the confusion with his decisive words: "Whoever worships Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. And whoever worships Allah, Allah is indeed Living and will never die."

In Makkah Suhayl performed the same role in dispelling the vain ideas some Muslims may have had and directing them to the eternal truths of Islam. He called the Muslims together and in his brilliant and salutary style, he affirmed to them that Muhammad was indeed the Messenger of Allah and that he did not die until he had discharged his trust and propagated the message and that it was the duty of all believers after his death to apply themselves assiduously to following his example and way of life.

On this day more than others, the prophetic words of the Messenger shone forth. Did not the Prophet say to Umar when the latter sought permission to pull out Suhayls teeth at Badr: "Leave them, for one day perhaps they would bring you joy"?

When the news of Suhayl's stand in Makkah reached the Muslims of Madinah and they heard of his persuasive speech strengthening the faith in the hearts of the believers, Umar ibn al-Khattab remembered the words of the Prophet. The day had come when Islam benefitted from the two middle incisors of Suhayl which Umar had wanted to pull out.

When Suhayl became a Muslim he made a vow to himself which could be summarized in these words: to exert himself and spend in the cause of Islam at least in the same measure as he had done for the mushrikin. With the mushrikin, he had spent long hours before their idols. Now he stood for long periods with the believers in the presence of the one and only God, praying and fasting.

Before he had stood by the mushrikin and participated in many acts of aggression and war against Islam. Now he took his place in the ranks of the Muslim army, fighting courageously, pitting himself against the fire of Persia and the injustice and oppression of the Byzantine empire.

In this spirit he left for Syria with the Muslim armies and participated in the Battle of Yarmuk against the Byzantines, a battle that was singularly ferocious in its intensity.

Suhayl was someone who loved his birthplace dearly. In spite of that, he refused to return to Makkah after the victory of the MusIims in Syria. He said: "I heard the Messenger of God, peace be on him, say: 'The going forth of anyone of you in the path of God for an hour is better for him than his life's works in his household.' "He vowed: "I shall be a murabit in the path of God till I die and I shall not return to Makkah."

For the rest of his life, Suhayl remained true to his pledge. He died in Palestine in the small village of 'Amawas near Jerusalem.

Talhah ibn Ubaydullah

Returning to Makkah in haste after a trading trip to Syria, Talhah asked his family: "Did anything happen in Makkah since we left?" "Yes," they replied. "Muhammad ibn Abdullah emerged alleging that he is a Prophet and Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) has followed him."

"I used to know Abu Bakr," said Talhah. "He is an easy-going, amiable, gentle man. He was an honest and upright trader. We were quite fond of him and loved sitting in his company because of his knowledge of Quraysh history and genealogy."

Later, Talhah went to Abu Bakr and asked: "Is it true what they say, that Muhammad ibn Abdullah has appeared as a Prophet and that you follow him." "Yes," replied Abu Bakr and went on to tell Talhah about Muhammad and what a good thing it would be if he too followed him. Talhah in turn told Abu Bakr the story of his strange recent encounter with an ascetic in the market-place of Busra in Syria. The ascetic is said to have told Talhah that someone called "Ahmad" would appear in Makkah about that time and that he would be the last of the Prophets. He also told Talhah, so the story goes, that the Prophet would leave the sacred precincts of Makkah and migrate to a land of black soil, water and palm trees...

Abu Bakr was astonished by the story and took Talhah to Muhammad. The Prophet, peace be on him, explained Islam to Talhah and recited some portions of the Quran to him. Talhah was enthusiastic. He related to the Prophet his conversation with the ascetic of Busra. There and then, Talhah pronounced the Shahadah - that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He was the fourth person who had been introduced to Islam by Abu Bakr.

The Quraysh were astounded by the young Talhah's acceptance of Islam. The one who was most dismayed and unhappy was his mother. She had hoped that he would one day be a leader in his community because of his noble character and his outstanding virtues. Some of the Quraysh, anxious and worried, went to Talhah as soon as they could to wean him away from his new religion but found him firm and unshakable as a rock. When they despaired of using gentle persuasion to achieve their aim, they resorted to persecution and violence. The following story is related by Masud ibn Kharash:

"While I was making saiy between as-Safa and al-Marwa, there appeared a crowd of people pushing a young man whose hands were tied behind his back. As they rushed behind him, they rained down blows on his head. In the crowd was an old woman who lashed him repeatedly and shouted abuses at him. I asked: 'What's the matter with this young man?' 'This is Talhah ibn Ubaydullah. He gave up his religion and now follows the Banu Hashim man.' 'And who is the woman behind him?' I asked. 'She is as-Sabah bint al-Hadrami, the young man's mother,' they said.

The Quraysh did not stop there. Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid, nicknamed the 'lion of the Quraysh" bound Talhah with a rope and with the same rope he tied up Abu Bakr and then handed them over to the mindless and violent mob of Makkah to be beaten and tortured. The shared experience no doubt drew Talhah and Abu Bakr closer together!

Years passed and events of great significance took place. Talhah grew in stature as he bore the pain and

suffering of being tested in the path of God and His Prophet. He gained the unique reputation among Muslims of being called the "living martyr". The Prophet, peace be on him, also called him "Talhah the Good" and "Talhah the Generous".

The name of the "living martyr" was earned during the Battle of Uhud. Talhah had missed the Battle of Badr. He and Said ibn Zayd had been sent outside Madinah on a mission by the Prophet and when they returned, the Prophet and his companions were already on the way back from Badr. They were both sad at having missed the opportunity of taking part in the first campaign with the Prophet but were tremendously pleased when he told them they would get the same reward as those who actually fought.

At the Battle of Uhud, when the Muslims fell into disarray at the beginning of hostilities the Prophet became dangerously exposed. There were about eleven men of the Ansar at his side and one Muhajir - Talhah ibn Ubaydullah. The Prophet clambered up the mountain hotly pursued by some mushrikin. The Prophet, peace be on him, shouted:

"The one who repulses these people from us will be my companion in Paradise." "I, O Messenger of god," shouted Talhah.

"No, stick to your position," replied the Prophet. A man from the Ansar volunteered and the Prophet agreed. He fought until he was killed. The Prophet went further up the mountain with the mushrikin still in close pursuit. "Isn't there someone to combat these?"

Talhah again volunteered but the Prophet ordered him to maintain his position. Another person immediately came forward, fought and was killed. This happened until all who stood by the Prophet were martyred except Talhah.

"Now, yes," signalled the Prophet and Talhah went into battle. By this time, the Prophet's teeth had been broken, his forehead had been slashed, his lips had been wounded and blood was streaming down his face. He was drained of energy. Talhah plunged into the enemy and pushed them away from the Prophet. He turned back to the Prophet and helped him a little further up the mountain and put him to lie on the ground. He then renewed his attack and successfully repulsed the enemy. About this occasion Abu Bakr said:

"At that moment, Abu Ubayd ibn al-Jarrah and I were far from the Prophet. When we came close to him to render assistance to him, the Prophet said: 'Leave me and go to your companion (meaning Talhah)."

There was Talhah, bleeding profusely. He had numerous wounds, from sword, spear and arrow. His foot had been cut and he had fallen into a hollow where he lay unconscious.

Thereafter, the Prophet, peace be on him, said: "Whoever is pleased to see a man still walking on earth who had completed his span (of life), let him look at Talhah ibn Ubaydallah."

And, whenever Uhud was recalled, As-Siddiq, may God be pleased with him, would say: "That day, that entire day, belonged to Talhah."

That was the story of how Talhah became to be called the "living martyr". There were unnumerabIe incidents which led to him being called "Talhah the Good" and "Talhah the Generous".

Talhah was an astute and successful merchant who travelled widely to the north and south of the Arabian peninsula. It is said that after one of his trips to Hadramawt, he had profits amounting to some

seven hundred thousand dirhams. His nights would be anxious and worried on account of this vast wealth. On one such night, his wife, Umm Kulthum the daughter of Abu Bakr, said to him:

"What's wrong with you, O father of Muhammad? Perhaps I have done something to hurt you.'?" "No ," replied Talhah. "You are a wonderful wife for a Muslim man. But I have been thinking since last night: How can a man think of his Lord and Sustainer when he goes to sleep with this wealth in his house?"

"Why should it bother you so much ," remarked Umm Kulthum. "What about all the needy ones in your community and all your friends? When you get up in the morning share it out among them."

"God bless you. You are really marvellous, the daughter of a marvellous man," said Talhah to his wife. In the morning, Talhah gathered up the money in bags and distributed it among the poor Muhajirin and Ansar.

It is related that a man came up to Talhah requesting help and also mentioning some common family connection between them.

"This family connection someone has mentioned to me before," said Talhah who was in fact known for his generosity to all members of his clan. Talhah told the man that he had just sold a piece of land to Uthman ibn Affan for several thousand dirhams. The man could have the money or the land which could be re-purchased from Uthman. The man opted for the money and Talhah gave it all to him.

Talhah was well-known for helping persons who had debt problems, heads of families who experienced hardship, and widows. One of his friends, as-Saib ibn Zayd, said of him: "I accompanied Talhah ibn Ubaydallah on journeys and I stayed with him at home and I have not found anyone who was more generous with money, with clothes and with food than Talhah."

No wonder he was called "Talhah the Good" and "Talhah the Generous".

The name Talhah is also connected with the first fitnah or civil war among Muslims after the death of the prophet, peace be on him.

The seeds of trouble were sown during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan. There were many complaints and accusations against him. Some mischief-makers were not content with accusations only but were determined to finish him off. In the year 35 AH (656 CE) a group of insurgents stormed Uthman's house and murdered him while he was reading the Quran. It was one of the most shocking events in the early history of Islam.

Ali was persuaded to accept the responsibility of the Caliphate and all Muslims swore allegiance to him, including Talhah and Zubayr ibn al-Awwam. Talhah and Zubayr were deeply shocked by the murder of Uthman. They were horrified and felt strongly that the murderers should be punished and that justice should be done. But the punishment of the murderers was not an easy task in as much as the crime was not just the work of a few individuals but involved a large number of persons.

Talhah and Zubayr sought Ali's permission to go to Makkah to perform Umrah. They met Aishah the wife of the Prophet. She was greatly shocked when she heard of the assassination of Uthman. From Makkah, Talhah, Zubayr and Aishah set off for Basrah where large numbers were gathering to seek revenge for the death of Uthman.

The forces gathered at Basrah seemed to present an open challenge to Ali. As the caliph of the Muslims

and the head of the entire Muslim State, he could not tolerate any insurrection or armed revolt against the State. But what a difficult and awesome task he faced! To deal with the revolt, he had to confront his brothers, his companions and his friends-followers of the Prophet and his religion, those who often fought side by side with him against the forces of shirk, those whom he respected and loved.

The forces clamoring for vengeance for Uthman and those supporting Ali met at a place called Kuraybah, near Basrah. Ali desired to avoid war and settle matters by peaceful means. He used every means at his disposal to achieve peace. He clung to every hope of avoiding confrontation. But the dark forces at work against Islam and how numerous were these, were determined that matters should come to a terrible and bloody end.

Ali wept. He wept bitterly when he saw Aishah, the "Mother of the Believers" in her hawdaj or palanquin astride a camel at the head of the army which now emerged to fight him. And when he saw Talhah and Zubayr, two close companions of the Prophet, in the midst of the army, he shouted to them to come out to him. They did and Ali said to Talhah:

"O Talhah, have you come with the wife of the Messenger of Allah to fight along with her...?" And to Zubayr he said:

"O Zubayr, I implore you, by God, do you remember the day when the Prophet. peace be on him, passed by you and we were in such and such a place and he asked you: 'Do you love Ali?' and you said: 'Why shouldn't I love my cousin and one who follows my religion...?'"

Ali continued talking to them reminding them of the bonds of brotherhood and faith. In the end both Talhah and Zubayr withdrew from participation in this civil war. They withdrew immediately when they saw the situation in a different light. But they paid for that withdrawal with their lives.

As they withdrew, a man named Amr ibn Jarmouz followed Zubayr and cowardly murdered him while he performed Salat. Talhah was killed by an arrow allegedly shot by Marwan - a cousin of Uthman who was too blinded by rage and the desire to seek revenge for his kinsman to respond to the possibility of avoiding war and bloodshed among Muslims.

The murder of Uthman had become Talhah's tryst with destiny. He did not participate in the fighting and killing that followed that came to be known in history as the "Battle of the Camel". Indeed, if he had known that the fitnah would have degenerated into such insane hatred and bitterness and resulted in such a bloody outcome, he would have resisted it. He was not keen to fight Ali. He was simply appalled by the murder of Uthman and wanted to see justice done. Before the beginning of the battle he had said in a voice choked with emotion:

"O Lord, for the sake of Uthman, take from me this day until You are pleased." Then when Ali faced him and Zubayr, they saw the correctness of his position and withdrew from the field of battle. Yet, in these difficult circumstances, martyrdom was reserved for them.

The Battle of Camel came to an end. Aishah, the mother of the believers, realized that she had precipitated matters and left Basrah for the Sacred Mosque and then to Madinah distancing herself from the conflict. Ali provided well for her journey giving her all the comfort and honor due to her.

When the numerous dead from the battle were brought together, Ali led the funeral prayer for them all, those who were with him and those who were against him. And when he had finished burying Talhah and Zubayr he bade farewell to them with a heavy heart, a heart filled with tenderness and love.

"I really hope," he said in simple and sublime words, "that Talhah, az-Zubayr, Uthman and I will be among those of whom God has said: 'And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury and rancor; they will be brothers joyfully facing each other on thrones of dignity.' "(The Quran, Surah al-Hijr, 15:47)

Then he looked tenderly and sorrowfully on the graves of his brothers in faith and said: "I have heard with these two ears of mine the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saying: "Talhah and az-Zubayr are my companions in Paradise!"

Thabit Ibn Qays

From Alim® Online

Thabit ibn Qays was a chieftain of the Khazraj and therefore a man of considerable influence in Yathrib. He was known for the sharpness of his mind and the power of his oratory. It was because of this that he became the khatib or the spokesman and orator of the Prophet and Islam.

He became a Muslim at the hands of Musab ibn Umayr whose cool and persuasive logic and the sweetness and beauty of his Quran recital proved irresistible.

When the Prophet arrived in Madinah after the historic Hijrah, Thabit and a great gathering of horsemen gave him a warm and enthusiastic welcome. Thabit acted as their spokesman and delivered a speech in the presence of the Prophet and his companion, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. He began by giving praise to God Almighty and invoking peace and blessings on His Prophet and ended up by saying:

"We give our pledge to you, O Messenger of God, that we would protect you from all that we protect ourselves, our children and our wives. What would then be our reward for this?"

The speech was reminiscent of words spoken at the second Pledge of Aqabah and the Prophet's reply as then was the same: "Al-Jannah - Paradise!"

When the Yathribites heard the word "al-Jannah" their faces beamed with happiness and excitement and their response was: "We are pleased, O Messenger of God! We are pleased, O Messenger of God ."

From that day on the Prophet, peace be on him, made Thabit ibn Qays his Khatib, just as Hassan ibn Thabit was his poet. When delegations of Arabs came to him to show off their brilliance in verse and the strength of their oratory skills which the Arabs to ok great pride in, the Prophet would call upon Thabit ibn Qays to challenge their orators and Hassan ibn Thabit to vaunt his verses before their poets.

In the Year of the Delegations, the ninth after the Hijrah, tribes from all over the Arabian peninsula came to Madinah to pay homage to the Prophet, either to announce their acceptance of Islam or to pay jizyah in return for the protection of the Muslim s tate. One of these was a delegation from the tribe of Tamim who said to the Prophet:

"We have come to show our prowess to you. Do give

permission to our Shaif and our Khatib to speak." The Prophet, peace be on him, smiled and said: "I permit your Khatib. Let him speak."

Their orator, Utarid ibn Hajib, got up and held forth on the greatness and achievements of their tribe and when he was finished the Prophet summoned Thabit ibn Qays and said: "Stand and reply to him." Thabit arose and said:

"Praise be to God Whose creation is the entire heavens and the earth wherein His will has been made

manifest. His Throne is the extent of His knowledge and there is nothing which does not exist through His grace.

"Through His power He has made us leaders and from the best of His creation He has chosen a Messenger who is the most honorable of men in lineage, the most reliable and true in speech and the most excellent in deeds. He has revealed to him a book and chos en him as a leader of His creation. Among all creation, he is a blessing of God.

"He summoned people to have faith in Him. The Emigrants from among his people and his relations who are the most honorable people in esteem and the best in deeds believed in him. Then, we the Ansar (Helpers) were the first people to respond (to his call for support). So we are the Helpers of God and the ministers of His Messenger."

Thabit was a believer with a profound faith in God. His consciousness and fear of God was true and strong. He was especially sensitive and cautious of saying or doing anything that would incur the wrath of God Almighty. One day the Prophet saw him looking not just sad but dejected and afraid. His shoulders were haunched and he was actually cringing from fear.

"What's wrong with you, O Abu Muhammad?" asked the Prophet.

"I fear that I might be destroyed, O Messenger of God," he said.

"And why?" asked the Prophet.

"God Almighty," he said, "has prohibited us from desiring to be praised for what we did not do but I find myself liking praise. He has prohibited us from being proud and I find myself tending towards vanity." This was the time when the verse of the Qur an was revealed: "Indeed, God does not love any arrogant boaster."

The Prophet, peace be on him, then tried to calm his anxieties and allay his fears and eventually said to him: "O Thabit, aren't you pleased to live as someone who is praised, and to die as a martyr and to enter Paradise?"

Thabit's face beamed with happiness and joy as he said: "Certainly, O Messenger of God."

"Indeed, that shall be yours," replied the noble Prophet.

There was another occasion when Thabit became sad and crest-fallen, when the words of the Quran were revealed:

"O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet and neither speak loudly to him as you would speak loudly to one another, lest all your deeds come to naught without your perceiving it."

On hearing these words, Qays kept away from the meetings and gatherings of the Prophet in spite of his great love for him and his hitherto constant presence in his company. He stayed in his house a/most without ever leaving it except for the performance o f the obligatory Salat. The Prophet missed his presence and evidently asked for information about him. A man from the Ansar volunteered and went to Thabit's house. He found Thabit sitting in his house, sad and dejected, with his head bowed low.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the man.

"It's bad," replied Thabit. "You know that I am a man with a loud voice and that my voice is far louder than that of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. And you know what has been revealed in the Quran. The only result for me is t hat my deeds will come to naught and I will be among the people who go to the fire of hell."

The man returned to the Prophet and told him what he had seen and heard and the Prophet instructed him to return to Thabit and say: "You are not among the people who will go to the fire of hell but you will be among the people of Paradise."

Such was the tremendously good news with which Thabit ibn Qays was blessed. The incidents showed how alive and sensitive he was to the Prophet and the commands of Islam and his readiness to observe the letter and the spirit of its laws. He subjected himse lf to the most stringent self-criticism. His was a God-fearing and penitent heart which trembled and shook through the fear of God.

From Alim® Online

Thumamah Ibn Uthal

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

In the sixth year after the hiCrah, the Prophet, may the blessings of God be on him, decided to expand the scope of his mission. He sent eight letters to rulers in the Arabian peninsula and surrounding areas inviting them to Islam. One of these rulers was Thumamah ibn Uthal.

Thumamah was one of the most powerful Arab rulers in pre-Qur'anic times. This is not surprising since he was a chieftain of the Banu Hanifah and one of the rulers of al- Yamamah whose word no one dared to challenge or disobey.

When Thumamah received the Prophet's letter, he was consumed by anger and rejected it. He refused to listen to the invitation of Truth and goodness. More than that, he felt a strong desire to go and kill the Prophet and bury his mission with him.

Thumamah waited and waited for a convenient time to carry out his design against the Prophet until eventually forgetfulness caused him to lose interest. One of his uncles, however, reminded him of his plan, praising what he intended to do.

In the pursuit of his evil design against the Prophet, Thumamah met and killed a group of the Prophet's companions. The Prophet thereupon declared him a wanted man who could lawfully be killed on sight.

Not long afterwards, Thumamah decided to perform umrah. He wanted to perform tawaf around the Ka'bah and sacrifice to the idols there. So he left al-Yamamah for Makkah. As he was passing near Madinah, an incident took place which he had not anticipated.

Groups of Muslims were patrolling the districts of Madinah and outlying areas on the lookout for any strangers or anyone intent on causing trouble. One of these groups came upon Thumamah and apprehended him but they did not know who he was. They took him to Madinah and tied him to one of the columns in the mosque. They waited for the Prophet himself to question the man and decide what should be done with him.

When the Prophet was about to enter the mosque, he saw Thumamah and asked his companions, "Do you know whom you have taken?"

"No, messenger of God," they replied.

"This is Thumamah ibn Uthal al-Hanafi," he said. "You have done well in capturing him."

The Prophet then returned home to his family and said, "Get what food you can and send it to Thumamah ibn Uthal." He then ordered his camel to be milked for him. All this was done before he met Thumamah or had spoken to him.

The Prophet then approached Thumamah hoping to encourage him to become a Muslim. "What do you have to say for yourself9" he asked.

"If you want to kill in reprisal," Thumamah replied, "you can have someone of noble blood to kill. If, out of your bounty, you want to forgive, I shall be grateful. If you want money in compensation, I shall give you whatever amount you ask."

The Prophet then left him for two days, but still personally sent him food and drink and milk from his camel. The Prophet went back to him and asked, "What do you have to say for yourself7" Thumamah repeated what he had said the day before. The Prophet then left and came back to him the following day. "What do you have to say for yourself?" he asked again and Thumamah repeated what he had said once more. Then the Prophet turned to his companions and said, "Set him free."

Thumamah left the mosque of the Prophet and rode until he came to a palm grove on the outskirts of Madinah near al-Baqi' (a place of luxuriant vegetation which later became a cemetery for many of the Prophet's companions). He watered his camel and washed himself well. Then he turned back and made his way to the Prophet's mosque. There, he stood before a congregation of Muslims and said:

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger." He then went to the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and said:

"O Muhammad, by God, there was never on this earth a face more detestable than yours. Now, yours is the dearest face of all to me."

"I have killed some of your men," he continued, "I am at your mercy. What will you have done to me?"

"There is now no blame on you, Thumamah," replied the Prophet. "Becoming a Muslim obliterates past actions and marks a new beginning."

Thumamah was greatly relieved. His face showed his surprise and joy and he vowed, "By God, I shall place my whole self, my sword, and whoever is with me at your service and at the service of your religion."

"O Rasulullah," he went on, "when your horsemen captured me I was on my way to perform umrah. What do you think I should do now?"

"Go ahead and perform your umrah," replied the Prophet, "but perform it according to the laws of God and His messenger." The Prophet then taught him how to perform umrah according to Islamic rules.

Thumamah left to fulfil his intention. When he reached the valley of Makkah, he began shouting in a loud, resonant voice: "Labbayk Allakumma labbayk. Labbayka laa shareeka laka labbayk. Innal hamda wa-n ni'mata laka wa-l mulk Laa shareeka lak.

(Here I am at Your command O Lord, Here I am. Here I am. No partner have You. Here I am. Praise, bounty and Dominion belong to You. No partner have You.")

He was thus the first Muslim on the face of the earth to enter Makkah reciting the talbEyah.

The Quraysh heard the sound of the talbiyah and felt both anger and alarm. With drawn swords, they set out towards the voice to punish the one who had thus assaulted their preserve. As they came closer to him, Thumamah raised his voice even higher while reciting the talbiyah and looked upon them with pride and defiance. One of the Quraysh young men was particularly incensed and was about to shoot Thumamah with an arrow when the others grabbed his hand and shouted:

"Woe to you! Do you know who this is? He is Thumamah ibn Uthal, ruler of al-Yamamah. By God, if you should harm him, his people would cut our supplies, with dire consequences for us."

Swords were replaced in their scabbards as the Quraysh went up to Thumamah and said:

"What's wrong with you, Thumamah? Have you given in and abandoned your religion and the religion of your forefathers?"

"I have not given in," he replied, "but I have decided to follow the best religion. I follow the religion of Muhammad. "

He then went on:

"I swear to you by the Lord of this House that after my return to al-Yamamah, no grain of wheat or any of its produce shall reach you until you follow Muhammad."

Under the watchful eyes of the Quraysh, Thumamah performed umrah as the Prophet, peace be upon him, had instructed him. He dedicated his sacrifice to God alone.

Thumamah returned to his land and ordered his people to withhold supplies from the Quraysh. The boycott gradually began to have effect and became more and more stringent. Prices began to rise. Hunger began to bite and there was even fear of death among the Quraysh.

Thereupon, they wrote to the Prophet, saying:

"Our agreement with you (the treaty of Hudaybiyyah) is that you should maintain the bonds of kinship but you have gone against that. You have cut the bonds of kinship. You have killed and caused death through hunger. Thumamah ibn Uthal has cut our supplies and inflicted harm on us. Perhaps you would see fit to instruct him to resume sending us what we need."

The Prophet immediately sent a messenger instructing Thumamah to lift the boycott and resume supplies to the Quraysh. This Thumamah did.

Thumamah spent the rest of his life in the service of his religion, abiding by the undertaking he had given to the Prophet. When the Prophet died, many Arabs began leaving the religion of God in great numbers. Musaylamah, the imposter, began calling the Banu Hanifah to believe in him as a Prophet. Thumamah confronted him and said to his people:

"O Banu Hanifah, beware of this grievous matter. There is no light or guidance in it. By God, it will only bring distress and suffering to whoever joins this movement and misfortune even to those who do not join.

"O Banu Hanifah, two prophets do not come at the same time and there shall be no Prophet after Muhammad and no Prophet to share in his mission."

He then read out to them the following verses of the Qur'an:

"Ha Mim. The revelation of this Book is from God the Almighty, the Knowing. He forgives sins and accepts repentance. He is severe in punishment and has a long reach. There is no god except Him. To Him is the journey's end." (Surah Ghafir; verses 1-3).

"Can you compare these words of God with the utterings of Musaylamah?" he asked.

He then gathered together all those who had remained in Islam and began to wage a jihad against the apostates and to make the words of God supreme. The loyal Muslims of Banu Hanifah needed additional help to stand against the armies of Musaylamah. Their arduous task was completed by the forces despatched by Abu Bakr but at the cost of many a Muslim life.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Ubayy Ibn Kab

From Alim® Online

"O Abu Mundhir! Which verse of the Book of God is the greatest?" asked the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. "Allah and His Messenger know best," came the reply. The Prophet repeated the question and Abu Mundhir replied.

"Allah, there is no god but He, the Living the Self-Subsisting. Neither slumber overtakes him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth, ..." and most likely he went on to complete the Verse of the Throne (Ayat al-Kurs i).

The Prophet smote his chest with his right hand in approval on hearing the reply and with his countenance beaming with happiness, said to Abu Mundhir. "May knowledge delight and benefit you, Abu Mundhir."

This Abu Mundhir whom the Prophet congratulated on the knowledge and understanding which God had bestowed on him was Ubayy ibn Kab, one of his distinguished companions and a person of high esteem in the early Muslim community.

Ubayy was one of the Ansar and belonged to the Khazraj tribe. He was one of the first persons of Yathrib to accept Islam. He pledged allegiance to the Prophet at Aqabah before the Hijrah. He participated in the Battle of Badr and other engagements there after. Ubayy was one of the select few who committed the Quranic revelations to writing and had a Mushaf of his own. He acted as a scribe of the Prophet, writing letters for him. At the demise of the Prophet, he was one of the twenty five or so people who knew the Quran completely by heart. His recitation was so beautiful and his understanding so profound that the Prophet encouraged his companions to learn the Quran from him and from three others. Later, Umar too once told the Muslims as he was dealing wi th some financial matters of state:

"O people! Whoever wants to ask about the Quran, let him go to Ubayy ibn Kab..." (Umar went on to say that anyone wishing to ask about inheritance matters should go to Zayd ibn Thabit, about questions of fiqh to Muadh ibn Jabal and about questions of mone y and finance, to himself.)

Ubayy enjoyed a special honor with regard to the Quran. One day, the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "O Ubayy ibn Kab! I have been commanded to show or lay open the Quran to you."

Ubayy was elated. He knew of course that the Prophet only received commands from on high. Unable to control his excitement, he asked:

"O Messenger of God...Have I been mentioned to you by name?" "Yes," replied the Prophet, "by your own name and by your genealogy (nasab) in the highest heavens."

Any Muslim whose name had been conveyed to the heart of the Prophet in this manner must certainly have been of great ability and of a tremendously high stature.

Throughout the years of his association with the Prophet, Ubayy derived the maximum benefit from his sweet and noble personality and from his noble teachings. Ubayy related that the Prophet once asked him:

"Shall I not teach you a surah the like of which has not been revealed in the Tawrah, nor in the Injil, nor in the Zabur, nor in the Quran?"

"Certainly," replied Ubayy.

"I hope you would not leave through that door until you know what it is," said the Prophet obviously prolonging the suspense for Ubayy. Ubayy continues: "He stood up and I stood up with him. He started to speak, with my hand in his. I tried to delay him fearing that he would leave before letting me know what the surah is. When he reached the door, I asked: "O Messenger of God! The surah which you promised to tell me..." He replied:

"What do you recite when you stand for Salat?" So, I recited for him Fatihatu-l Kitab (the Opening Chapter of the Quran) and he said: "(That's) it! (That's) it! They are the seven oft-repeated verses of which God Almighty has said: We have given you the seven oft-repeated verses and the Mighty Quran."

Ubayy's devotion to the Quran was uncompromising. Once he recited part of a verse which the Khalifah Umar apparently could not remember or did not know and he said to Ubayy: "Your have lied," to which Ubayy retorted; "Rather, you have lied."

A person who heard the exchange was astounded and said to Ubayy: "Do you call the Amir al-Muminin a liar?"

"I have greater honor and respect for the Amir al-Muminin than you," responded Ubayy," but he has erred in verifying the Book of God and I shall not say the Amir al-Muminin is correct when he has made an error concerning the Book of God."

"Ubayy is right," concluded Umar.

Ubayy gave an idea of the importance of the Quran when a man came to him and said, "Advise me," and he replied: "Take the Book of God as (your) leader (imam). Be satisfied with it as (your) judge and ruler. It is what the Prophet has bequeathed to you. (It is your) intercessor with God and should be obeyed..."

After the demise of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, Ubayy remained strong in his attachment to Islam and his commitment to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. He was constant in his ibadah and would often be found in the mosque at night, after the last obligatory Prayer had been performed, engaged in worship or in teaching. Once he was sitting in the mosque after Salat with a group of Muslims, making supplication to God. Umar came in and sat with them and asked each one to recite a dua. They all did until finally Ubayy's turn came. He was sitting next to Umar. He felt somewhat over-awed and became flustered. Umar prompted him and suggested that he say: "Allahumma ighfir lanaa. Allahumma irhamnaa. O Lord, forgive us, O Lord, have mercy on us."

Taqwa remained the guiding force in Ubayy's life. He lived simply and did not allow the world to corrupt or deceive him. He had a good grasp of reality and knew that however a person lived and whatever comforts and luxuries he enjoyed, these would all fad e away and he would have only his good deeds to his credit. He was always a sort of warner to Muslims, reminding them of the times of the Prophet, of the Muslims' devotion to Islam then, of their simplicity and spirit of sacrifice. Many people

came to him seeking knowledge and advice. To one such person he said.

"The believer has four characteristics. If he is afflicted by any misfortune, he remains patient and steadfast. If he is given anything, he is grateful. If he speaks, he speaks the truth. If he passes a judgment on any issue, he is just."

Ubayy attained a position of great honor and esteem among the early Muslims. Umar called him the "sayyid of the Muslims" and he came to be widely known by this title. He was part of the consultative group (mushawarah) to which Abu Bakr, as Khalifah, refer red many problems. This group was composed of men of good sense and judgment (ahl ar-ray) and men who knew the law (ahl al-fiqh) from among the Muhajirin and Ansar. It included Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdur Rahman ibn Awl, Muadh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Kab and Z ayd ibn Harith. Umar later consulted the same group when he was Khalifah. Specifically for fatwas (legal judgments) he referred to Uthman, Ubayy and Zayd ibn Thabit.

Because of Ubayy's high standing, one might have expected him to have been given positions of administrative responsibility, for example as a governor, in the rapidly expanding Muslim state. (During the time of the Prophet in fact he had performed the fun ction of a collector of sadaqah.) Indeed, Ubayy once asked

"What's the matter with you? Why don't you appoint me as a governor?"

"I do not want your religion to be corrupted" replied Umar.

Ubayy was probably prompted to put the question to Umar when he saw that Muslims were tending to drift from the purity of faith and self-sacrifice of the days of the Prophet. He was known to be especially critical of the excessively polite and sycophan tic attitude of many Muslims to their governors which he felt brought ruin both to the governors and those under them. Ubayy for his part was always honest and frank in his dealings with persons in authority and feared no one but God. He acted as a sort o f conscience to the Muslims. One of Ubayy's major fears for the Muslim ummah was that a day would come when there would be severe strife among Muslims. He often became overwhelmed with emotion when he read or heard the verse of the Quran."

"Say: He (Allah) has power to send calamities on you, from above and below, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance, each from the other." (Surah al-An'am, 6: 65)

He would then pray fervently to God for guidance and ask for His clemency and forgiveness. Ubayy died in the year 29 AH during the caliphate of Uthman.

Umayr ibn Sad al-Ansari

Umayr ibn Sad became an orphan at an early age. His father died leaving him and his mother poor and destitute. His mother eventually married again, to one of the richest men in Madinah. His name was Julas ibn Suwayd who was from the powerful tribe of al-Aws.

Umayr was well looked after by Julas and loved him as a son would love a father. Indeed he began to forget that he was an orphan. As Umayr grew older, Julas fondness and love for him grew. Julas would marvel at the intelligence he displayed in everything he did and at the honesty and trustworthiness which characterized his behavior.

When he was barely ten years old, Umayr became a Muslim. Faith found in his tender heart a secure niche and penetrated deeply into his being. In spite of youthfulness, he would never delay in the performance of salat behind the noble Prophet. Often he would be found in the first row of worshippers, hoping for the thawab promised those who attend mosques early and sit in the foremost rows. His mother was particularly pleased whenever she saw him going to and coming from the mosque, sometimes with her husband and sometimes alone.

Umayr's days passed in this fashion with no major disturbance to upset his calm and contentment. This idyllic state, however, could not last forever. Umayr was soon to face a most difficult test for a boy of his age, a test which shook the peaceful and loving atmosphere of his home and challenged the steadfastness of his faith.

In the ninth year after the Hijrah, the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, announced his intention to lead an expedition to Tabuk against the Byzantine forces. He ordered the Muslims to get themselves ready and make the necessary preparations.

Usually when the Prophet wanted to go on a military campaign he would not give precise details of his objective or he would set off in a direction opposite to his intended destination. This was for security purposes and to confound the enemy's intelligence service. This he did not do in announcing the expedition to Tabuk. This was perhaps because of the great distance of Tabuk from Madinah, the enormous difficulties expected and the overwhelming strength of the enemy.

The preparations needed for this expedition had to be extensive. In spite of the fact that summer had set in and the intense heat produced languor and listlessness, and in spite of the fact that the date crops needed harvesting, the Muslims responded enthusiastically to the call of the Prophet and busied themselves in preparing for the arduous campaign ahead.

There was however a group of munafiqun or hypocrites who outwardly had declared their acceptance of Islam but inwardly did not believe in it. They were critical of the expedition and tried to weaken the resolve of the Muslims. They even ridiculed the Prophet in their private gatherings. Disbelief and hatred remained in their hearts.

One day, shortly before the army was due to set out, the young Umayr ibn Sad returned home after performing Salat in the mosque. He was all agog with excitement. He had just witnessed the great

generosity and the spontaneous spirit of sacrifice which the Muslims displayed in preparing for the expedition. He had seen women of the Muhajirin and the Ansar donating their jewellery and their ornaments to buy provisions and equipment for the army. He had seen Uthman ibn Affan handing over a purse containing a thousand gold dinars to the Prophet and Abdur Rahman ibn Awl carrying on his shoulders two hundred awqiyyah of gold and placing it before the noble Prophet. Indeed he had even seen a man trying to sell his bed in order to purchase a sword for himself.

At home, he recalled these moving and inspiring scenes. He was surprised however that Julas was so slow in preparing for the expedition with the Prophet and at his delay in contributing especially since he was quite rich and could afford to give generously. Umayr felt that he had to arouse his ardor or stir his sense of generosity and manliness. So with great enthusiasm he related what he had seen and heard at the mosque particularly the case of those believers who, with great fervor, had come to enlist themselves in the army and were turned away by the Prophet because there was not sufficient means of transport. He related how sad and disappointed these people were at not realizing their desire to go on the path of Jihad and sacrifice for the sake of Islam. Julas' response was sharp and shocking.

"If Muhammad is true in claiming that he is a Prophet ," he shouted angrily, "then we are all worse than donkeys."

Umayr was flabbergasted. He could not believe what he had heard. He did not think that a man as intelligent as Julas could have uttered such words, words which put him instantly outside the pale of faith.

A host of questions paced through his mind and he immediately began to consider what action he should take. He saw in Julas' silence and his tardiness to respond to the Prophet's call, clear signs of a traitor to God and His Prophet, who wanted to bring harm to Islam in just the same way as the munafiqun who were plotting and conspiring against the Prophet. At the same time he saw a man who had treated him as a father and who was kind and generous to him, who had taken him as an orphan and had saved him from poverty.

Umayr had to choose between preserving this close relationship with Julas on the one hand and dealing with his treachery and hypocrisy on the other. The choice was painful but his decision was swift. He turned to Julas and said:

"By God, O Julas, there is no one on the face of the earth, after Muhammad ibn Abdullah, dearer to me than you. You are the closest of men to me and you have been most generous to me. But you have uttered words which, if I should mention them will expose and humiliate you. If I conceal them, however, I will be a traitor to my trust and destroy myself and my religion. I will, therefore, go to the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, and tell him what you have said. It is up to you to clarify your position."

The young Umayr went to the mosque and told the Prophet what he had heard from Julas. The Prophet asked him to stay with him and sent one of his companions to summon Julas.

Julas came, greeted the Prophet and sat in front of him. The Prophet, peace be upon him straightaway asked him: "What did you say that Umayr ibn Sad heard?" and he mentioned what Umayr had reported to him.

"He has lied against me, O Messenger of God, and has fabricated this. I have not uttered anything of the sort" asserted Julas.

The companions of the Prophet looked alternately at Julas and Umayr hoping to detect on their faces what their hearts concealed. They began to mutter among themselves. One of those in whose hearts was the disease of hypocrisy asserted:

"The youth is a nuisance. He is bent on defaming someone who has been good to him." Others replied: "Not at all. He is a youth who grew up in obedience to God. The expressions on his face attest to his truthfulness."

The Prophet, peace be on him, turned to Umayr and saw his flushed face and the tears streaming down his cheeks. Umayr prayed:

"O Lord, send down a revelation on Your Prophet to verify what I have told him." Julas meanwhile continued to defend what he had said: "What I have told you, O Messenger of God, is certainly the truth. If you wish, make us swear an oath in your presence. I swear by God that I did not say anything of the sort that Umayr reported to you."

As the companions turned to Umayr to hear what he had to say, they saw the Prophet come under a special mood of serenity and they realized that he was being inspired. Immediately there was complete silence as they gazed intently at the Prophet in anticipation.

At this point, fear and terror gripped Julas and he began to look tremulously at Umayr. The Prophet, having received the revelation, recited the words of God:

"(The hypocrites) swear by God that they have said (nothing wrong); yet most certainly they have uttered a saying which is a denial of the truth, and have thus denied the truth after having professed their self-surrender to God; for they were aiming at something which was beyond their reach. And they could find no fault (with the Faith) save that God had enriched them and (caused) His Apostle to enrich them out of His bounty. Hence, if they repent, it will be for their own good; but if they turn away, God will cause them to suffer a grievous suffering in this world and in the life to come and they will find no helper on earth, and none to give them succour." (The Quran, Surah at-Tawbah, 9:74).

Julas trembled with fear at what he heard and in his anguish, could hardly speak. Finally, he turned to the Prophet and said: "I do repent, O Messenger of God. I do repent. Umayr told the truth and I lied. I beseech God to accept my repentance..."

The Prophet turned to the young Umayr. Tears of joy moistened his youthful face, radiant with the light of faith. With his noble hand, the Prophet tenderly took his

ear and said:

"Young man, your ear has been true in what it heard and your Lord has confirmed the truth of what you said." Julas returned to the fold of Islam and was a good and faithful Muslim thereafter. The companions realized that by his generosity and good treatment of Umayr, he had reformed. Whenever Umayr was mentioned, Julas would say:

"My God reward Umayr with goodness on my behalf. He certainly saved me from kufr and preserved my neck from the fire of hell."

Umayr grew up and distinguished himself in later years with the same devotion and firmness which he had shown in early life.

During the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab, the people of Hims in Syria complained much and bitterly of the governors appointed to the city even though Umar in particular used to pay special attention to the type of men he chose as his provincial governors. In selecting a governor, Umar would say: "I want a man who when he is among the people and is not their amir, should not behave as their amir, and when he is among them as an amir, he should behave as one of them.

"I want a governor who will not distinguish himself from the people by the clothes he wears, or the food he eats or the house he lives in."

"I want a governor who would establish Salat among the people, treat them equitably and with justice and does not close his door when they come to him in need."

In the light of the complaints of the people of Hims and going by his own criteria for a good governor, Umar ibn al-Khattab decided to appoint Umayr ibn Sad as governor of the region. This was despite the fact that Umayr at that time was at the head of a Muslim army traversing the Arabian peninsula and the region of great Syria, liberating towns, destroying enemy fortifications, pacifying the tribes and establishing masjids wherever he went. Umayr accepted the appointment as governor of Hims reluctantly because he preferred nothing better than Jihad in the path of God. He was still quite young, in his early twenties.

When Umayr reached Hims he called the inhabitants to a vast congregational prayer. When the prayer was over he addressed them. He began by praising and giving thanks to God and sending peace and blessings on His Prophet Muhammad. Then he said:

"O people! Islam is a mighty fortress and a sturdy gate. The fortress of Islam is justice and its gate is truth. If you destroy the fortress and demolish the gate you would undermine the defences of this religion.

"Islam will remain strong so long as the Sultan or central authority is strong. The strength of the Sultan neither comes from flogging with the whip, nor killing with the sword but from ruling with justice and holding fast to truth."

Umayr spent a full year in Hims during which, it is said, he did not write a single letter to the Amir al-Muminin. Nor did he send any taxes to the central treasury in Madinah, neither a dirham nor a dinar.

Umar was always concerned about the performance of his governors and was afraid that positions of authority would corrupt them. As far as he was concerned, there was no one who was free from sin and corrupting influences apart from the noble Prophet, peace be upon him. He summoned his secretary and said:

"Write to Umayr ibn Sad and say to him: "When the letter of the Amir al-Muminin reaches you, leave Hims and come to him and bring with you whatever taxes you have collected from the Muslims."

Umayr received the letter. He took his food pouch and hung his eating, drinking and washing utensils over his shoulder. He took his spear and left Hims and the governorship behind him. He set off for Madinah on foot.

As Umayr approached Madinah, he was badly sunburnt, his body was gaunt and his hair had grown long. His appearance showed all the signs of the long and arduous journey. Umar, on seeing him, was astonished. What's wrong with you, Umayr?" he asked with deep concern.

"Nothing is wrong with me, O Amir al-Muminin," replied Umayr. "I am fine and healthy, praise be to God, and I carry with me all (my) worldly possessions."

"And what worldly possessions have you got?" asked Umar thinking that he was carrying money for the Bayt al-mal or treasury of the Muslims."

"I have my pouch in which I put my food provisions. I have this vessel from which I eat and which I use for washing my hair and clothes. And I have this cup for making wudu and drinking..." "Did you come on foot?" asked Umar. "Yes, O Amir al-Muminin." "Weren't you given from your amirship an animal to ride on?" "They did not give me one and I did not ask them."

"And where is the amount you brought for the Baytalmal?"

"I didn't bring anything."

"And why not?"

"When I arrived at Hims," said Umayr, "I called the righteous persons of the town to a meeting and gave them the responsibility of collecting the taxes. Whenever they collected any amounts of money I would seek their advice and spent it (all) on those who were deserving among them."

At this point, Umar turned to his secretary and said:

"Renew the appointment of Umayr to the governorship of Hims." "Oh, come now," protested Umayr. "That is something which I do not desire. I shall not be a governor for you nor for anyone after you, O Amir al-Muminin."

With that Umayr asked the Khalifah's permission to go to his village on the outskirts of Madinah to live there with his family. This Umar granted.

A long time passed since Umayr had gone to his village and Umar decided to put him through a test to make sure of his circumstances. He said to one of his trusted aides called al-Harith:

"Harith, go to Umayr ibn Sad and stay with him as though you were a guest. If you see on him any signs of luxury or good living, return quietly as you went. If, however, you find him in straitened circumstances give him these dinars." Umar handed Harith a bag with a hundred dinars.

Al-Harith set our for Umayr's village and found his home after making enquiries.

"As-salamu alaykum wa rahmatullah," he greeted Umayr.

"Wa alaykum as-salam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu," replied Umayr and asked, "From where have you come?"

"From aI-Madinah."

"How arr the Muslims there?"

"Fine."

"How is the Amir al-Muminin?"

"He is fine and doing well."

"Has he applied the hudud laws?"

"Yes. He carried out the sentence of punishment on his own son for committing the crime of adultery. His son died as a result of the punishment." Al-Harith continued: "O Allah, help Umar. I only know that he has a great love for you."

Al-Harith stayed as Umayr's guest for three nights. On each night he was given only a small flat piece of barley bread. On the third day a local man said to Harith:

"Umayr and his family are suffering great hardship. They only have these loaves which they have given you in preference to themselves. They are hungry and in great distress. Harith went to Umayr and gave him the bag of money.

"What is this?" asked Umayr.

"The Amir al-Muminin sent it to you."

"Return it to him. Give him my greetings of peace and tell him that Umayr has no need of it."

"Take it, O Umayr," shouted his wife who was listening to the conversation between her husband and his guest. "If you need it, you can spend it. If not, you can spend it in other appropriate ways, for those in need here are many."

When al-Harith heard what she had said, he placed the dinars in front of Umayr and left. Umayr took the money and placed it in a small bag. He only went to sleep that night after he had distributed the money to those in need and especially to the children of those who had been martyred.

Al-Harith returned to Madinah and was questioned by Umar al-Faruq.

"What have you seen, Harith?"

"A very distressing situation, O Amir al-Muminin."

"Did you give him the dinars?"

"Yes, O Amir al-Muminin."

"What did he do with them?"

"I don't know. But I think that he did not keep a single dirham of it for himself."

Al-Faruq wrote to Umayr: "When you receive this letter, I do not put it down until you come to me."

Umayr proceeded straightaway to Madinah. Umar greeted and welcomed him and proceeded to question him.

"What did you do with the dinars, Umayr?" "You have no responsibility for the money after you have donated it to me."

"I adjure you to tell me what you did with it."

"I stored it away for myself so that I could benefit from

it a day when neither wealth nor children will be of any avail." Tears came to Umar's eyes as he said:

"I swear that you are one of those who are hard against themselves even when they are in dire need." And he ordered a camel load of food and two garments to be given to Umayr who protested:

"About the food, we do not need it, O Amir al-Mumineen. I left two saas of barley with my family and when we have finished that, Allah- Great and Exalted is He - will provide. As for the two garments, I will take them for (my wife). Her dress is now in tatters and she is almost naked."

Not long after that meeting with Umar al-Faruq, Umayr ibn Sad passed away to his Lord. He was not weighted down with the cares and burdens of the world and he was concerned to provide plenty of provisions for the hereafter. Umar received the news of his death with a heavy heart and said in deep sorrow: "I have wished to have men like Umayr ibn Sad whose help I could seek in dealing with the affairs of Muslims."

Umayr Ibn Wahb

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Umayr ibn Wahb al-Jumahi returned safely from the Battle of~Badr. His son, Wahb, was left behind, a prisoner in the hands of the Muslims. Umayr feared that the Muslims would punish the youth severely because of the persecution he himself had meted out to the Prophet and the torture he had inflicted on his companions.

One morning Umayr went to the Sacred Mosque to make tawaf around the Ka'bah and worship his idols. He found Safwan ibn Umayyah sitting near the Ka'bah, went up to him and said:

"Im Sabahan (Good Morning), Quraysh chieftain."

"Im Sabahan, Ibn Wahb," replied Safwan. "Let us talk for some time. Time only goes by with conversation."

Umayr sat next to him. The two men began to recall Badr, the great defeat they had suffered and they counted the prisoners who had fallen into the hands of Muhammad and his companions. They became deeply distressed at the number of great Quraysh men who had been killed by the swords of the Muslims and who lay buried in the mass grave at alQalib in Badr.

Safwan ibn Umayyah shook his head and sighed, "By God, there can be no better after them."

"You are right," declared Umayr. He remained silent for a while and then said, "By the God of the Ka'bah, if I had no debts and no family whose loss I fear after me, I would go to Muhammad and kill him, finish off his mission and check his evil." He went on in a faint, subdued voice, "And as my son Wahb is among them, my going to Yathrib would be beyond doubt."

Safwan ibn Umayyah listened intently to the words of Umayr and did not wish this opportunity to pass. He turned to him and said:

"Umayr, place all your debt in my hands and I will discharge it for you whatever the amount. As for your family, I shall take them as my own family and give them whatever they need. I have enough wealth to guarantee them a comfortable living."

"Agreed," said Umayr. "But keep this conversation of ours secret and do not divulge any of it to anyone."

"That shall be so," said Safwan.

Umayr left the Masjid al-Haram with the fire of hatred against Muhammad blazing in his heart. He began to count what he needed for the task he had set himself. He knew that he had the full support and confidence of the Quraysh who had members of their families held prisoner in Madinah.

Umayr had his sword sharpened and coated with poison. His camel was prepared and brought to him. He mounted the beast and rode in the direction of Madinah with evil in his heart.

Umayr reached Madinah and went directly towards the mosque looking for the Prophet. Near the door of the mosque, he alighted and tethered his camel.

At that time, Umar was sitting with some of the Sahabah near the door of the Mosque, reminiscing about Badr, the number of prisoners that had been taken and the number of Quraysh killed. They also recalled the acts of heroism shown by the Muslims, both the Muhajirun and the Ansar and gave thanks to God for the great victory He had given them.

At that very moment Umar turned around and saw Umayr ibn Wahb alighting from his camel and going towards the Mosque brandishing his sword. Alarmed, he jumped up and shouted. "This is the dog, the enemy of God, Umayr ibn Wahb. By God, he has only come to do evil. He led the Mushrikeen against us in Makkah and he was a spy for them against us shortly before Badr. Go to the Messenger of God, stand around him and warn him that this dirty traitor is after him."

Umar himself hastened to the Prophet and said, "O Rasulullah, this enemy of God, Umayr ibn Wahb, has come brandishing his sword and I think that he could only be up to something evil."

"Let him come in," said the Prophet.

Umar approached Umayr, took hold of him by the tails of his robes, pressed the back of his sword against his neck and took him to the Prophet.

When the Prophet saw Umayr in this condition he said to Umar:

"Release him." He then turned to Umayr and said:

"Come closer."

Umayr came closer and said, "Anim Sabahan (the Arab greeting in the days of Jahiliyyah)."

"God has granted us a greeting better than this, Umayr," said the Prophet. "God has granted us the greeting of PeaceÑit is the greeting of the people of Paradise."

"What have you come for?" continued the Prophet.

"I came here hoping to have the prisoner in your hands released, so please oblige me."

"And what is this sword around your neck for?" quizzed the Prophet.

"Tell me the truth. What have you come for, Umayr?" prodded the Prophet.

"I have only come to have the prisoner released," insisted Umayr.

"No. You and Safwan ibn Umayyah sat near the Ka'bah recalling your companions who lie buried at al-Qalib and then you said, 'If I had no debt or no family to look after, I would certainly go out to kill Muhammad.' Safwan took over your debt and promised to look after your family in return for your agreeing to kill me. But God is a barrier between you and your achieving your aim." Umayr stood

stupefied for a moment, then said:

"I bear witness that you are the messenger of God."

"We used, O messenger of God," he continued, "to reject whatever good you had brought and whatever revelation came to you. But my conversation with Safwan ibn Umayyah was not known to anyone else. By God, I am certain that only God could have made this known to you. Praise be to God Who has led me to you that He may guide me to Islam." He then testified that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and became a Muslim. Thereupon, the Prophet instructed his companions:

"Instruct your brother in his religion. Teach him the Qur'an and set free his prisoner."

The Muslims were extremely happy with Umayr's acceptance of Islam. Even Umar, who once said of him, "A pig is certainly dearer to me than Umayr ibn Wahb" came up to the Prophet and exclaimed, "Today, he is dearer to me than some of my own children."

Thereafter Umayr spent much time increasing his knowledge of Islam and filling his heart with the light of the Qur'an. There, in Madinah, he spent the sweetest and richest days of his life away from what he had known in Makkah.

Back in Makkah, Safwan was filled with hope and would say to the Quraysh, "I will soon give you some great news that would make you forget the events of Badr."

Safwan waited for a long time and then gradually became more and more anxious. Greatly agitated, he would go out and ask travellers what news they had of Umayr ibn Wahb but no one was able to give him a satisfactory reply. Eventually a rider came and said, "Umayr has become a Muslim."

The news hit Safwan like a thunderbolt. He was certain that Umayr would never become a Muslim and if he ever did then everyone on the face of the earth would become Muslim also. '4Never shall I speak to him and never shall I do anything for him," he said.

Umayr meanwhile kept on striving to gain a good understanding of his religion and memorize whatever he could of the words of God. When he felt he had achieved a certain degree of confidence, he went to the Prophet and said:

"O Rasulullah, much time has passed since I used to try to put out the light of God and severely tortured whoever was on the path of Islam. Now, I desire that you should give me permission to go to Makkah and invite the Quraysh to God and His Messenger. If they accept it from me, that will be good. And if they oppose me, I shall harass them as I used to harass the companions of the Prophet."

The Prophet gave his consent and Umayr left for Makkah. He went straight to the house of Safwan ibn Umayyah and said:

"Safwan, you are one of the chieftains of Makkah and one of the most intelligent of the Quraysh. Do you really think that these stones you are worshipping and making sacrifice to, deserve to be the basis of a religion? As for myself, I declare that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

At Umayr's hands, many Makkans became Muslims, but Safwan did not.

Later, during the liberation of Makkah, Safwan ibn Umayyah attempted to flee from the Muslim forces. Umayr, however, obtained an amnesty from the Prophet for him and he too became a Muslim and distinguished himself in the service of Islam.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Umm Salamah

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Umm Salamah! What an eventful life she had! Her real name was Hind. She was the daughter of one of the notables in the Makhzum clan nicknamed "Zad ar-Rakib" because he was well known for his generosity partlcularly to travellers. Umm Salamah's husband was Abdullah ibn Abdulasad and they both were among the first persons to accept Islam. Only Abu Bakr and a few others, who could be counted on the fingers of one hand, became Muslims before them.

As soon as the news of their becoming Muslims spread, the Quraysh reacted with frenzied anger. They began hounding and persecuting Umm Salamah and her husband. But the couple did not waver or despair and remained steadfast in their new faith.

The persecution became more and more intense. Life in Makkah became unbearable for many of the new Muslims. The Prophet, peace be upon him, then gave permission for them to emigrate to Abyssinia. Umm Salamah and her husband were in the forefront of these muhajirun, seekers of refuge in a strange land. For Umm Salamah it meant abandoning her spacious home and giving up the traditional ties of lineage and honour for something newÑhope in the pleasure and reward of Allah.

Despite the protection Umm Salamah and her companions received from the Abyssinian ruler, the desire to return to Makkah, to be near the Prophet and the source of relevation and guidance persisted.

News eventually reached the muhajErun that the number of Muslims in Makkah had increased. Among them were Hamzah ibn Abdulmuttalib and Umar ibn al-Khattab. Their faith had greatly strengthened the community and the Quraysh they heard, had eased the persecution somewhat. Thus a group of the muhajErun, urged on by a deep longing in their hearts, decided to return to Makkah.

The easing of the persecution was but brief as the returnees soon found out. The dramatic increase in the number of Muslims following the acceptance of Islam by Hamzah and Umar only infuriated the Quraysh even more. They intensified their persecution and torture to a pitch and intensity not known before. So the Prophet gave permission to his companions to emigrate to Madinah. Umm Salamah and her husband were among the first to leave.

The hijrah of Umm Salamah and her husband though was not as easy as they had imagined. In fact, it was a bitter and painful experience and a particularly harrowing one for her.

Let us leave the story now for Umm Salamah herself to tell . . .

When Abu Salamah (my husband) decided to leave for Madinah, he prepared a camel for me, hoisted me on it and placed our son Salamah on my lap. My husband then took the lead and went on without stopping or waiting for anything. Before we were out of Makkah however some men from my clan stopped us and said to my husband:

"Though you are free to do what you like with yourself, you have no power over your wife. She is our

daughter. Do you expect us to allow you to take her away from us?"

They then pounced on him and snatched me away from him. My husband's clan, Banu Abdulasad, saw them taking both me and my child. They became hot with rage.

"No! By Allah," they shouted, "we shall not abandon the boy. He is our son and we have a first claim over him."

They took him by the hand and pulled him away from me. Suddenly in the space of a few moments, I found myself alone and lonely. My husband headed for Madinah by himself and his clan had snatched my son away from me. My own clan, Banu Makhzum, overpowered me and forced me to stay with them.

From the day when my husband and my son were separated from me, I went out at noon every day to that valley and sat at the spot where this tragedy occurred. I would recall those terrible moments and weep until night fell on me.

I continued like this for a year or so until one day a man from the Banu Umayyah passed by and saw my condition. He went back to my clan and said:

"Why don't you free this poor woman? You have caused her husband and her son to be taken away from her."

He went on trying to soften their hearts and play on their emotions. At last they said to me, "Go and join your husband if you wish."

But how could I join my husband in Madinah and leave my son, a piece of my own flesh and blood, in Makkah among the Banu Abdulasad? How could I be free from anguish and my eyes be free from tears were I to reach the place of hijrah not knowing anything of my little son left behind in Makkah?

Some realised what I was going through and their hearts went out to me. They petitioned the Banu Abdulasad on my behalf and moved them to return my son.

I did not now even want to linger in Makkah till I found someone to travel with me and I was afraid that something might happen that would delay or prevent me from reaching my husband. So I promptly got my camel ready, placed my son on my lap and left in the direction of Madinah.

I had just about reached Tan'im (about three miles from Makkah) when I met Uthman ibn Talhah. (He was a keeper of the Ka'bah in preIslamic times and was not yet a Muslim.)

"Where are you going, Bint Zad ar-Rakib?" he asked.

"I am going to my husband in Madinah."

"And there isn't anyone with you?"

"No, by Allah. Except Allah and my little boy here."

"By Allah, I shall never abandon you until you reach Madinah," he vowed.

He then took the reins of my camel and led us on. I have, by Allah, never met an Arab more generous and noble than he. When we reached a resting place, he would make my camel kneel down, wait until I dismounted, lead the camel to a tree and tether it. He would then go to the shade of another tree. When we had rested he would get the camel ready and lead us on.

This he did every day until we reached Madinah. When we got to a village near Quba (about two miles from Madinah) belonging to Banu Amr ibn Awf, he said, "Your husband is in this village. Enter it with the blessings of God. "

He turned back and headed for Makkah.

Their roads finally met after the long separation. Umm Salamah was overjoyed to see her husband and he was delighted to see his wife and son.

Great and momentous events followed one after the other. There was the battle of Badr in which Abu Salamah fought. The Muslims returned victorious and strengthened. Then there was the battle of Uhud in which the Muslims were sorely tested. Abu Salamah came out of this wounded very badly. He appeared at first to respond well to treatment, but his wounds never healed completely and he remained bedridden.

Once while Umm Salamah was nursing him, he said to her:

"I heard the Messenger of God saying. Whenever a calamity afflicts anyone he should say, "Surely from Allah we are and to Him we shall certainly return." And he would pray, 'O Lord, give me in return something good from it which only You, Exalted and Mig hty, can give.'"

Abu Salamah remained sick in bed for several days. One morning the Prophet came to see him. The visit was longer than usual. While the Prophet was still at his bedside Abu Salamah passed away. With his blessed hands, the Prophet closed the eyes of his dead companion. He then raised these hands to the heavens and prayed:

"O Lord, grant forgiveness to Abu Salamah. Elevate him among those who are near to You. Take charge of his family at all times. Forgive us and him, O Lord of the Worlds. Widen his grave and make it light for him."

Umm Salamah remembered the prayer her husband had quoted on his deathbed from the Prophet and began repeating it, "O Lord, with you I leave this my plight for consideration . . ." But she could not bring herself to continue . . . "O Lord give me something good from it", because she kept asking herself, "Who could be better than Abu Salamah?" But it did not take long before she completed the supplication.

The Muslims were greatly saddened by the plight of Umm Salamah. She became known as "Ayyin al-Arab"Ñ the one who had lost her husband. She had no one in Madinah of her own except her small children, like a hen without feathers.

Both the Muhajirun and Ansar felt they had a duty to Umm Salamah. When she had completed the Iddah (three months and ten days), Abu Bakr proposed marriage to her but she refused. Then Umar asked to marry her but she also declined the proposal. The Prophe t then approached her and she replied:

"O Messenger of Allah, I have three characteristics. I am a woman who is extremely jealous and I am

afraid that you will see in me something that will anger you and cause Allah to punish me. I am a woman who is already advanced in age and I am a woman wh o has a young family."

The Prophet replied:

"Regarding the jealousy you mentioned, I pray to Allah the Almighty to let it go away from you. Regarding the question of age you have mentioned. I am afflicted with the same problem as you. Regarding the dependent family you have mentioned, your family is my family."

They were married and so it was that Allah answered the prayer of Umm Salamah and gave her better than Abu Salamah. From that day on Hind al Makhzumiyah was no longer the mother of Salamah alone but became the mother of all believersÑ Umm al-Mu'mineen.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Uqbah Ibn Aamir

After a long and exhausting journey, the Prophet, peace be on him, is at last on the outskirts of Yathrib. The good people of the city go out to meet him. Many crowd the narrow streets. Some stand on roof-tops chanting La ilaha ilia Allah and Allahu Akbar in sheer joy at meeting the Prophet of Mercy and his loyal companion, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. The small girls of the city come out gaily beating their daffs and singing the words of welcome:

Tala 'a-l badru alaynaa

Min Thaniyaati-l Wadaa' Wajaba-sh shukru alaynaa

Maa da'aa lillaahi daa' Ayyuha-l mab 'uthu finaa

Ji'ta bi-l amri-l mutaa' Ji'ta sharrafta-l Madinah

Marhaban yaa khayra-d daa'.

"The full moon has come upon us. From beyond the hills of Thaniyaati-l Wadaa Grateful we must be. For what to God he calls? O you who has been sent among us? You came with a mission to be obeyed. You came, you honoured the city; Welcome, O best of those w ho call (to God).

As the procession of the blessed Prophet wended its way, all around there were joyful hearts, tears of ecstasy, smiles of sheer happiness.

Far away from these scenes of jubilation and delight was a young man named Uqbah ibn Aamir al-Juhani. He had gone out to the bawadi, the open expanses of desert, to graze his flocks of sheep and goats on the sparse vegetation. He had wandered far in searc h of fodder for his hungry flock. It was difficult to find suitable grazing grounds and he was constantly afraid that his flock would perish. They were all he possessed and he did not want to lose them.

The happiness which engulfed Yathrib, henceforth to be known as the radiant city of the Prophet, soon spread to the near and distant bawadi and reached every nook and corner of the land. The good news of the Prophet's arrival finally reached Uqbah as he t ended his flocks far away in the inhospitable desert. His response to the news was immediate as he himself relates: "The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, came to Madinah while I was tending my sheep. When I heard the news of his coming, I s et out to meet him without delay. When I met him I asked:

'Will you accept my pledge of allegiance, O Messenger of God?' 'And who are you?' asked the Prophet. 'Uqbah ibn Aamir al-Juhani ,' I replied. 'Which do you prefer,' he asked, 'the pledge of a nomad or the pledge of someone who has migrated?' 'The pledge o f someone who has migrated,' I said. So the Messenger of God took the same pledge from me as he did from the Muhajirin. I spent the night with him and then went back to my flock.

There were twelve of us who had accepted Islam but we lived far from the city tending our sheep and

goats in the open country. We came to the conclusion that it would be good for us if we went to the Prophet daily, so that he could instruct us in our reli gion and recite for us whatever revelation he had received from on high. I told the others:

'Take turns to go to the Messenger of God, peace be on him. Anyone going may leave his sheep with me because I am too worried and concerned about my own flock to leave them in the care of someone else.'

Each day, one after another of my friends went to the Prophet, leaving his sheep for me to look after. When each returned, I learnt from him what he had heard and benefitted from what he had understood. Before long, however, I returned to my senses and sa id to myself:

'Woe to you! Is it because of a flock of sheep that you remain thin and wretched and lose the opportunity to be in the company of the Prophet and to speak directly to him without an intermediary':' With this, I left my flock, went to Madinah and stayed in the masjid close to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace."

Uqbah had no reason to regret having taken this fateful decision. Within a decade, he had become one of the outstanding scholars among the companions of the Prophet, a competent and beautiful reciter of the Quran, a military commander and later on one of the eminent Muslim governors as Islam spread east and west with astonishing rapidity. He could never have imagined as he left his flock to follow the teachings of the noble Prophet, that he would have been among the vanguard of the Muslim forces that libe rated fertile Damascus - then known as the "mother of the universe" and that he would have a house for himself among its verdant gardens. He could never have imagined that he would be one of the commanders who liberated Egypt, then known as the "emerald o f the world", and that he would be one of its governors.

The fateful decision however was taken. Alone, without possessions. or relatives, Uqbah came to Madinah from the hawadi. He stayed with others like him on the Suffah or elevated part of the Prophet's mosque, near his house. The Suffah was like a reception point where people like Uqbah would go because they wanted to be close to the Prophet. They were known as the "Ashab as-Suffah" and the Prophet once described them as the "guests of Islam".

Because they had no income, the Prophet always shared his food with them and encouraged others to be generous to these "guests". They spent much of their time studying the Quran and learning about Islam. What a marvellous opportunity they had! They were i n close and regular contact with the Prophet. He had a special love and concern for them and took care to educate them and look after them in all respects. Uqbah gave an example of how the Prophet trained and taught them. He said:

"One day, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came out to us while we were on the Suffah and asked:

'Which of you would like to go out to the open country or a valley every day and fetch for himself two beautiful, black camels?' (Such camels were considered prize possessions.)

'Everyone of us would like that, O Messenger of God,' we all replied.

'Now,' he said, 'each one of you should go to the mosque and learn two ayats (verses) of the Book of God. This is better for him than two camels; three verses are better than three camels; four verses are better than four camels (and son)."

In this way, the Prophet tried to bring about a change in attitudes among those who had accepted Islam, a change from obsession with acquiring worldly possessions to an attitude of devotion to knowledge. His simple example provided them with motivation an d a powerful incentive to acquire knowledge.

On other occasions, the Ashab as-Suffah would ask questions of the Prophet in order to understand their religion better. Once, Uqbah said, he asked the Prophet, "What is salvation?" and he replied: "Control your tongue, make your house spacious for guests and spurn your mistakes."

Even outside the mosque, Uqbah tried to stay close to the Prophet. On journeys, he often took the reins of the Prophet's mule and went wherever the Prophet desired. Sometimes he followed directly behind the Prophet, peace be on him, and so came to be call ed the redif of the Prophet. On some occasions, the Prophet would descend from his mount and allow Uqbah to ride while he himself walked. Uqbah described one such occasion:

"I took hold of the reins of the Prophet's mule while passing through some palm groves of Madinah.

'Uqbah ,' the Prophet said to me, 'don't you want to ride.'?'

I thought of saying 'no' but I felt there might be an element of disobedience to the Prophet in such a reply so I said: 'Yes, O Prophet of God.'

The Prophet then got down from his mule and I mounted in obedience to his command. He began to walk. Shortly afterwards I dismounted. The Prophet mounted again and said to me:

'Uqbah, shall I not teach you two surahs the like of which has not been heard before.'?'

'Certainly, O Messenger of God,' I replied. And so he recited to me "Qul a'udhu bi rabbi-l Falaq" and "Qul a'udhu bi rabbi-n nas" (the last two surahs of the Quran). I then said the Iqamah for Salat. The Prophet led the Salat and recited these two surahs. (Afterwards), he said: 'Read both these surahs when you go to sleep and whenever you wake up.'"

The above instances show "continuous education" at its best, at home, in the mosque, riding, walking in the open school of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Two objectives occupied Uqbah's attention throughout his life; the search for knowledge and jihad in the path of God. He applied his energies totally to these objectives.

In the field of learning, he drank deeply from the fountain of knowledge that was the Messenger of God, peace be on him. Uqbah became a distinguished muqri (reciter of the Quran), a muhaddith (recorder and narrator of the sayings of the Prophet); a faqih (jurist); a faradi (expert on the Islamic laws of inheritance); an adib (literateur); a fasih (orator) and a sha'ir (poet).

In reciting the Quran, he had a most pleasant and beautiful voice. In the stillness of the night, when the entire universe seems peaceful and tranquil, he would turn to the Book of God, and recite its overpowering verses. The hearts of the noble companion s would be drawn to his recitation. Their whole being would be shaken and they would be moved to tears from the fear of God which his recitation induced.

One day Umar ibn al-Khattab invited him and said:

"Recite for me something from the Book of God, O Uqbah." "At your command, O Amir al-Muminin," said Uqbah and began reciting. Umar wept till his beard was wet.

Uqbah left a copy of the Quran written in his own hand. It is said that this copy of the Quran existed until quite recently in Egypt in the well-known mosque named after Uqbah ibn Aamir himself. At the end of this text was written: "Uqbah ibn Aamir al-Juh ani wrote it." This Mushaf of Uqbah was one of the earliest copies of the Quran in existence but it was lost in its entirety with other priceless documents due to the carelessness of Muslims.

In the field of Jihad, it is sufficient to know that Uqbah fought beside the Prophet, peace be on him, at the Battle of Uhud and in all the military engagements thereafter. He was also one of the valiant and daring group of shock troopers who were tested to their maximum during the battle for Damascus. In recognition for his outstanding services, the commander of the Muslim forces then, Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah, despatched Uqbah to Madinah to convey the good news of the liberation of Damascus to Umar ibn al-Khattab. Uqbah spent eight days and seven nights, from Friday to Friday, in a continuous forced march to bring the news to Umar.

Uqbah was one of the commanders of the Muslim forces that liberated Egypt. For three years he was the Muslim governor of Egypt after which he received orders from the Caliph Muawiyah to mount a naval expedition to the island of Rhodes in the Mediterranean Sea.

An indication of Uqbah's enthusiasm for jihad is the fact that he committed to memory the sayings of the Prophet on this subject and became a specialist in narrating them to the Muslims. One of his favorite pastimes was to practice the skill of spear thro wing.

Uqbah was in Egypt when he became fatally ill. He gathered his children together and gave them his final advise. He said: "My children, guard against three things: Don't accept; my saying attributed to the Prophet, peace be on him, except from a reliable authority. Do not incur debts or take up a loan even if you are in the position of an imam. Don't compose poetry for your hearts might be distracted thereby from the Quran."

Uqbah ibn Aamir al-Juhani, the qari, the alim, the ghazi, died in Cairo and was buried at the foot of the Muqattam hills.

Utbah Ibn Ghazwan

From Alim® Online

Umar ibn al-Kattab, the head of the rapidly expanding Muslim State went to bed early just after the Salat al-Isha. He wanted to have a rest and feel refreshed for his nightly tour of inspection of the capital city which he often did incognito. Before he could/all asleep however, the post from the outlying regions of the State arrived informing him that the Persian forces confronting the Muslims were proving especially difficult to subdue. They were able to send in reinforcements and supplies from many pl aces to relieve their armies on the point of defeat. The letter urged Umar to send reinforcements and in particular it said:

"The city of al-Ubullah must be considered one of the most important sources providing men and material to the Persian forces under attack."

Umar decided then to despatch an army to take the city of al-Ubullah and cut off its line of supplies to the Persian armies. His main problem was that he had so few men left with him in the city. That was because young men, men of maturity and even old men had gone out on campaigns far and wide in the path of God, fi sabilillah.

In these circumstances he determined to follow the strategy which he knew and which was well-tried that is, to mobilize a small force and place it under the leadership of a strong and able commander. He considered, one after another the names of the indiv iduals who were still with him, to see who was the most suitable commander. Finally, he exclaimed himself: "I have found him. Yes I have found him."

He then went back to bed: The person he had in mind was a well-known mujahid who had fought at Badr, Uhud, al-Khandaq and other battles. He had also fought in the terrible battles of Yamamah and emerged unscathed. He was in fact one of the first to a ccept Islam. He went on the first hijrah to Abyssinia but had returned to stay with the Prophet in Makkah. He then went on hijrah to Madinah. This tall and imposing companion of the Prophet was known for his exceptional skill in the use of spears and arr ows.

When morning came, Umar called his attendants and said: "Call Utbah ibn Ghazwan for me," Umar managed to put together an army of just over three hundred men and he appointed Utbah as their commander with the promise that he would send reinforcements to hi m as soon as possible.

When the army was assembled in ranks ready to depart, Umar al-Faruq stood before them bidding them farewell and giving instructions to his commander, Utbah. He said: "Utbah, I am sending you to the land of al-Ubullah. It is one of the major fortresses of the enemy and I pray that God helps you to take it. When you reach the city, invite its inhabitants to the worship of God. If they respond to you, accept them (as Muslims). If they refuse, then take from them the jizyah.. If they refuse to pay the jizy ah then fight them... And fear God, O Utbah, in the discharge of your duties. Beware of letting yourself become too haughty or arrogant for this will corrupt your hereafter. Know that you were a companion of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and gr ant him peace. God honoured you through him after your being insignificant. He strengthened you through him after you were weak. You have become a commander with authority and a leader who must be obeyed. What a great blessing if this does not make you v ain and deceive you and lead you to Jahannam. May God protect you and me from it."

With this chastening advice and prayer, Utbah and his army set off. Several women were in the army including his wife and the wives and sisters of other men. Eventually they reached a place called Qasbaa not very far from al-Ubullah. It was called Qasbaa because of the abundance of reed-like stalks which grew there.

At that point the army was absolutely famished. They had nothing to eat. When hunger gripped them, Utbah ordered some of his men to go and search the land for something to eat. One of the men told the story of their search of food:

"While we were searching for something to eat, we entered a thicket and, lo and behold there were two large baskets. In one there were dates and in the other small white grains covered with a yellow husk. We dragged the baskets with the grain and said: "T his is poison which the enemy has prepared for you. Don't go near it all."

We went for the dates and began eating from it. While we were busy eating the dates, a horse which had broken loose from its tether went up to the basket of grain and began eating from it. By God, we seriously thought of slaughtering it before it should die (from the alleged poison) and benefit from its meat. However, its owner came up to us and said: "Leave it. I shall look after it for the night and if I feel that it is going to die, I will slaughter it."

In the morning we found the horse quite healthy with no sign of ill effects. My sister then said: 'Yaa akhi, I have heard my father saying: Poison does not harm (food) if it is placed on fire and cooked well.'

We then took some of the grain, placed it in a pot and put it on a fire. After a short while my sister called out: 'Come and see how it has become red and the husks have begun to separate leaving white grains.'

We placed the white grains in a large bowl and Utbah said to us: 'Mention the name of Allah on it and eat it.' We ate and found it exceedingly delicious and good. We learnt after that the grain was called rice."

The army of Utbah then went on to the fortified city of al-Ubullah on the banks of the River Euphrates. The Persians used al-Ubullah as a massive arms depot. There were several fortresses in the city from which towers sprang. These were used as observatio n posts to detect any hostile movements outside the city.

The city appeared to be impregnable. What chance had Utbah of taking it with such a small force armed with only swords and spears? A direct assault was obviously futile and so Utbah had to resort to some stratagem.

Utbah had flags prepared which he had hung on spears. These he gave to the women and ordered them to march behind the army. His instructions to them then were: "When we get near to the city, raise the dust behind us so that the entire atmosphere is filled with it."

As they neared al-Ubullah, a Persian force came out to confront them, they saw the Muslims boldly advancing, the flags fluttering behind them and the dust which was being churned up and which filled the air around. They thought that the Muslims in front o f the flags were merely the vanguard of the advancing army, a strong and numerous army. They felt they would be no match for such a foe. They lost heart and prepared to evacuate the city. Picking up whatever valuables they could, they rushed to boats anch ored on the river and abandoned their well-fortified city.

Utbah entered al-Ubullah without losing any of his men. From this base he managed to bring surrounding towns and villages under Muslim control. When news spread of Utbah's successes, and of the richness of the land he had occupied, many people flocked to the region in search of wealth and easy living.

Uqbah noted that many Muslims now inclined towards a soft life and followed the ways and customs of the region and that this weakened their determination to continue struggling.

He wrote to Umar ibn al-Khattab asking for permission to build the garrison town of Basrah. He described the locations he had chosen for the city and Umar gave his assent. Basrah lay between the desert and the ports of the Gulf and from this base expediti ons were launched further east. The positioning of the town was for maximum military effectiveness (not merely to support an army of occupation).

Utbah himself planned the city and built its first great masjid which was a simple enclosure, roofed over at one end and suitable for mass assemblies. From the mosque, Utbah and his men went out on military campaigns. These men eventually settled on the land and built houses.

Utbah himself however did not build a house for himself but continued to live in a tent of cloth. He had seen how preoccupation with worldly possessions had caused many people to forget themselves and their real purpose in life. He had seen how men who no t long ago knew no food better than rice boiled in their husks, getting accustomed to sophisticated Persian patisserie like fasludhanj and lawzinaj made with refined flour, butter, honey and nuts of various kinds to the point where they hankered after the se things.

Utbah was afraid that his din would be affected by his dunya and he was concerned about his hereafter. He called men to the masjid of Basrah and addressed them thus: "O people! The dunya will come to an end and you will be carried from it to an abode whic h will not wane or disappear. Go to it with the best of your deeds. I look back and see myself among the early Muslims with the Messenger of Allah may God bless him and grant him peace. We had no food then apart from the leaves of trees and our lips woul d fester. One day I found a burdah. I tore it in two and shared it with Sad ibn Abi Waqqas. I made an aazar with one half and he did the same with the other half. Here we are today. There is not one of us but he is an amir of one of the garrison towns. I seek Allah's protection lest I become great in my own estimation and little in the sight of Allah.." With these words Utbah appointed someone else to stand in his place, and bade farewell to the people of Basrah.

It was the season of pilgrimage and he left to perform the Hajj. He then travelled to Madinah and there he asked Umar to relieve him of the responsibility of governing the city. Umar refused. He could not easily dispense with a governor of the quality of Utbah and said to him:

"You place your trusts and your responsibilities on my neck and then you abandon me to myself. No, by God, I shall never relieve you." So Umar prevailed upon him and commanded him to return to Basrah, Utbah knew that he had to obey the Amir al-Muminin but he did so with a heavy heart. He mounted his camel and on his way he prayed:

"O Lord, do not send me back to Basrah. O Lord, do not send me back to Basrah." He had not gone far from Madinah when his camel stumbled. Utbah fell and the injuries he sustained proved to be fatal.

Zayd Al-Khayr

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

People are made up of basic "metals" or qualities. The best of them in JahilEyyah are the best of them in Islam, according to a hadith of the Prophet.

Here are two pictures of a noble companionÑone during his life in Jahiliyyah and the other after he became a Muslim.

In Jahiliyyah, this Sahabi was known as Zayd al-Khayl. When he became a Muslim, the Prophet renamed him Zayd al-Khayr.

The tribe of Aamir were afflicted one year by a severe drought which destroyed crops and vegetation and caused livestock to perish. So bad was it that one man left the tribe with his family and went to Hira. There he left his family with the words, "Wait for me here till I return to you." He swore to himself not to return to them until he earned some money for them or died in the process.

The man took some provisions with him and walked all day in search of something for his family. At nightfall, he found himself in front of a tent. Nearby a horse was tethered and he said to himself:

"This is the first booty." He went to the horse, untied it and was about to mount it when a voice called out to him:

"Leave it and take your life as booty." He hastily abandoned the horse.

For seven days he walked until he reached a place where there was a pasture for camels. Nearby was an enormous tent with a leather dome, signs of great riches and wealth.

The man said to himself:

"Doubtless this pasture has camels and doubtless this tent has occupants." The sun was about to set. The man looked inside the tent and saw a very old man in the centre. He sat down behind the old man without the latter realizing his presence.

The sun soon set. A horseman, imposing and well built, approached. He rode his mount erect and tall. Two male servants accompanied him, one on his right and the other on his left. With him were almost a hundred she-camels and in front of them a huge male camel. Clearly he was a well-endowed man. To one of the servants he said, pointing to a fat camel:

"Milk this and give the old man a drink."-The shaykh drank one or two mouthfuls from the full vessel which was brought to him and left it. The wanderer went up to it stealthily and drank all the milk in it. The servant returned, took the vessel and said:

"Master, he has drunk it all." The horseman was happy and ordered another camel to be milked.

The old man drank only one mouthful and the wanderer drank hall ol what was left so as not to arouse the suspicion of the horseman. The horseman then ordered his second servant to kill a sheep. Some of it was grilled and the horseman fed the shaykh until he was satisfied. He and the two servants then ate. After this, they all slept soundly; their snoring filled the tent.

The wanderer then went to the he-camel, untied and mounted it. He rode off and the she camels followed. He rode throughout the night. At daybreak he looked around in every direction but did not see anyone following him. He pushed on until the sun was high in the sky. He looked around and suddenly saw something like an eagle or a big bird in the distance coming towards him. It quickly gained on him and soon he saw that it was the horseman on his horse .

The wanderer dismounted and tied the he-camel. He took out an arrow and placed it in his bow and stood in front of the other camels. The horseman stopped at a distance and shouted:

"Untie the camel." The man refused saying how he had left behind him a hungry family in Hira and how he had sworn not to return unless he had money or died in the process.

"You are dead if you do not untie the camel," said the horseman. The wanderer again refused to do so. The horseman threatened him once more and said:

"Hold out the reins of the camel. There are three knots in it. Tell me in which of them you want me to place my arrow." The man pointed to the middle knot and the horseman lodged an arrow right in the centre as if he had neatly placed it there with his hand. He did the same with the second and third knots. At that, the man quietly returned his own arrow to his quiver and gave himself up. The horseman took away his sword and his bow and said to him:

"Ride behind me." The man expected the worst fate to befall him now. He was at the complete mercy of the horseman who said:

"Do you think I will cause you harm when you have shared with Muhalhil (the old man, his father) his drink and his food last night?"

When the man heard the name Muhalhil, he was astonished and asked:

"Are you Zayd al-Khayl?"

"Yes," said the horseman.

"Be the best captor," pleaded the man.

"Don't worry," replied Zayd al-Khayl calmly. "If these camels were mine, I would give them to you. But they belong to one of my sisters. But stay some days with me. I am about to make a raid."

Three days later he raided the Banu Numayr and captured about a hundred camels, as booty. He gave them all to the man and sent some men with him as guards until he reached his family in Hira.

The above is a story of Zayd al-Khayl as he was in Jahiliyyah recounted by the historian ash-Shaybani. The books of Siyar give another picture of Zayd al-Khayl as he was in Islam . . .

When Zayd al-Khayl heard the news of the Prophet, peace be upon him, he made some of his own

enquiries and then decided to go to Madinah to meet the Prophet. With him was a big delegation of his people among whom were Zurr ibn Sudoos, Malik ibn Jubayr, Aamir ibn Duwayn and others.

When they reached Madinah, they went straight to the Prophet's Mosque and tethered their mounts at its door. It happened that as they entered, the Prophet was on the mimbar addressing the Muslims. His speech aroused Zayd and his delegation and they were also astonished by the rapt attention of the Muslims and the effect of the Prophet's words on them. The Prophet was saying:

"I am better for you than al-Uzza (one of the main idols of the Arabs in Jahiliyyah) and everything else that you worship. I am better for you than the black camel which you worship besides God."

The Prophet's words had two different effects on Zayd al-Khayl and those with him. Some of them responded positively to the Truth and accepted it. Some turned away and rejected it. One of the latter was Zurr ibn Sudoos. When he saw the devotion of the believers to Muhammad, both envy and fear filled his heart and he said to those with him:

"I see a man who shall certainly captivate all Arabs and bring them under his sway. I shall not let him control me ever." He then headed towards Syria where it is said he shaved his head (as was the practice of some monks) and became a Christian.

The reaction of Zayd and others was different. When the Prophet had finished speaking, Zayd stood up, tall and impressive-looking in the midst of the Muslims and said in a loud and clear voice:

"O Muhammad, I testify that there is no god but Allah and that you are the messenger of Allah." The Prophet came up to him and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Zayd al-Khayl the son of Muhalhil."

"From now on you are Zayd al-Khayr instead, not Zayd al-Khayl," said the Prophet. "Praise be to God Who has brought you from the hills and dales of your native land and softened your heart towards Islam." Thereafter he was known as Zayd al-Khayr (Zayd the Good).

The Prophet then took him to his house. With them were Umar ibn al-Khattab and some other Companions. The Prophet gave him a cushion to sit on but he felt very uncomfortable to recline thus in the presence of the Prophet and he returned the cushion. The Prophet handed it back to him and he returned it to him. This happened three times. Eventually, when they were all seated, the Prophet said to Zayd al-Khayr:

"O Zayd, no man has ever been described to me and when I see him he does not fit the description at all except you. You have two characteristics which are pleasing to God and His Prophet."

"What are they?" asked Zayd.

"Perseverance and sagacity," replied the Prophet.

"Praise be to God," said Zayd, "Who has given me what He and His Prophet like." He then turned directly to the Prophet and said:

"Give me, O rnessenger of God, three hundred horsemen and I promise you that I will secure Byzantine territory with them."

The Prophet praised his fervour and said, "What manner of man are you!"

During this visit, all those who stayed with Zayd became Muslims. They then desired to return to their homes in Najd and the Prophet bade them farewell. The great desire of Zayd al-Khayr to work and fight for the cause of Islam, however, was not to be realised.

In Madinah al-Munawwarah at that time there was an epidemic of fever and Zayd al-Khayr succumbed to it and said to those with him: "Take me away from the land of Qays. I have the fever of small pox. By God, I shall not fight as a Muslim before I meet Allah, the Mighty the Great."

Zayd took the road to his people in Najd in spite of the fact that the fever became more and more intense and slowed him down. He hoped at least to get back to his people and that they would become Muslims, through God's grace, at his hands. He struggled to overcome the fever but it got the better of him and he breathed his last on the way before reaching Najd. Between his acceptance of Islam and his death, however, there was no time for him to have fallen into sin.

Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

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List of the Sahaabah's Biographies

Zayd ibn Thabit

We are in the second year of the Hijrah. Madinah the city of the Prophet is buzzing with activity as the Muslims prepare for the long march southwards to Badr.

The noble Prophet made a final inspection of the first army to be mobilized under his leadership to wage Jihad against those who had tormented the Muslims for many years and who were still bent on putting an end to his mission.

A youth, not yet thirteen, walked up to the ranks. He was confident and alert. He held a sword which was as long or possibly slightly longer than his own height. He went up to the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and said: "I dedicate myself to you, Messenger of God. Permit me to be with you and to fight the enemies of God under your banner."

The noble Prophet looked at him with admiration and patted his shoulder with loving tenderness. He commended him for his courage but refused to enlist him because he was still too young.

The youth, Zayd ibn Thabit, turned and walked away, dejected and sad. As he walked, in slow and measured paces, he stuck his sword in the ground as a sign of his disappointment. He was denied the honor of accompanying the Prophet on his first campaign. Behind him was his mother, an-Nawar bint Malik. She felt equally dejected and sad. She had dearly wished to see her young son go with the army of mujahidin and to be with the Prophet at this most critical time.

One year later, as preparations were underway for the second encounter with the Quraysh which took place at Uhud, a group of Muslim teenagers bearing arms of various kinds - swords, spears, bows and arrows and shields - approached the Prophet. They were seeking to be enlisted in any capacity in the Muslim ranks. Some of them, like Rafi ibn Khadij and Samurah ibn Jundub, who were strong and well-built for their age and who demonstrated their ability to wrestle and handle weapons, were granted permission by the Prophet to join the Muslim forces. Others like Abdullah the son of Umar and Zayd ibn Thabit were still considered by the Prophet to be too young and immature to fight. He promised though to consider them for a later campaign. It was only at the Battle of the Ditch when Zayd was about sixteen years old that he was at last allowed to bear arms in defence of the Muslim community.

Although Zayd was keen to participate in battles, it is not as a warrior that he is remembered. After his rejection for the Badr campaign, he accepted the fact then that he was too young to fight in major battles. His alert mind turned to other fields of service, which had no connection with age and which could bring him closer to the Prophet, peace be on him. He considered the field of knowledge and in particular of memorizing the Quran. He mentioned the idea to his mother. She was delighted and immediately made attempts to have his ambition realized. An-Nuwar spoke to some men of the Ansar about the youth's desire and they in turn broached the matter with the Prophet, saying: "O Messenger of Allah, our son Zayd ibn Thabit has memorized seventeen surahs of the Book of Allah and recites them as correctly as they were revealed to you. In addition to that he is good at reading and writing. It is in this field of service that he desires to be close to you. Listen to him if you will."

The Prophet, peace be on him, listened to Zayd reciting some surahs he had memorized. His recitation was clear and beautiful and his stops and pauses indicated clearly that he understood well what he recited. The Prophet was pleased. Indeed he found that Zayd's ability exceeded the commendation he had been given by his relatives. The Prophet then set him a task which required intelligence, skill and persistence.

"Zayd, learn the writing of the Jews for me," instructed the Prophet. "At your command, Messenger of Allah," replied Zayd who set about learning Hebrew with enthusiasm. He became quite proficient in the language and wrote it for the Prophet when he wanted to communicate with the Jews. Zayd also read and translated from Hebrew when the Jews wrote to the Prophet. The Prophet instructed him to learn Syriac also and this he did. Zayd thus came to perform the important function of an interpreter for the Prophet in his dealings with non-Arabic speaking peoples.

Zayd's enthusiasm and skill were obvious. When the Prophet felt confident of his faithfulness in the discharge of duties and the care, precision and understanding with which he carried out tasks, he entrusted Zayd with the weighty responsibility of recording the Divine revelation.

When any part of the Quran was revealed to the Prophet, he often sent for Zayd and instructed him to bring the writing materials, "the parchment, the ink-pot and the scapula", and write the revelation.

Zayd was not the only one who acted as a scribe for the Prophet. One source has listed forty-eight persons who used to write for him. Zayd was very prominent among them. He did not only write but during the Prophet's time he collected portions of the Quran that were written down by others and arranged these under the supervision of the Prophet. He is reported to have said:

"We used to compile the Quran from small manuscripts in the presence of the Prophet." In this way, Zayd experienced the Quran directly from the Prophet himself. It could be said that he grew up with the verses of the Quran, understanding well the circumstances surrounding each revelation. He thus became well-versed in the secrets of the Shariah and at an early age gained the well-deserved reputation as a leading scholar among the companions of the Prophet.

After the death of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the task fell on this fortunate young man who specialized in the Quran to authenticate the first and most important reference for the ummah of Muhammad. This became an urgent task after the wars of apostasy and the Battle of Yamamah in particular in which a large number of those who had committed the Quran to memory perished.

Umar convinced the Khalifah Abu Bakr that unless the Quran was collected in one manuscript, a large part of it was in danger of being lost. Abu Bakr summoned Zayd ibn Thabit and said to him: "You are an intelligent young man and we do not suspect you (of telling lies or of forgetfulness) and you used to write the Divine revelation for Allah's Messenger. Therefore look for (all parts of) the Quran and collect it in one manuscript."

Zayd was immediately aware of the weighty responsibility. He later said: "By Allah, if he (Abu Bakr) had ordered me to shift one of the mountains from its place, it would not have been harder for me than what he had ordered me concerning the collection of the Quran."

Zayd finally accepted the task and, according to him, "started locating the Quranic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leafstalks of date palms and from the memories of men (who knew it by heart)".

It was a painstaking task and Zayd was careful that not a single error, however slight or unintentional, should creep into the work. When Zayd had completed his task, he left the prepared suhuf or sheets with Abu Bakr. Before he died, Abu Bakr left the suhuf with Umar who in turn left it with his daughter Hafsah. Hafsah, Umm Salamah and Aishah were wives of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them, who memorized the Quran.

During the time of Uthman, by which time Islam had spread far and wide, differences in reading the Quran became obvious. A group of companions of the Prophet, headed by Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, who was then stationed in Iraq, came to Uthman and urged him to "save the Muslim ummah before they differ about the Quran".

Uthman obtained the manuscript of the Quran from Hafsah and again summoned the leading authority, Zayd ibn Thabit, and some other competent companions to make accurate copies of it. Zayd was put in charge of the operation. He completed the task with the same meticulousness with which he compiled the original suhuf during the time of Abu Bakr.

Zayd and his assistants wrote many copies. One of these Uthman sent to every Muslim province with the order that all other Quranic materials whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies be burnt. This was important in order to eliminate any variations or differences from the standard text of the Quran. Uthman kept a copy for himself and returned the original manuscript to Hafsah.

Zayd ibn Thabit thus became one of the foremost authorities on the Quran. Umar ibn al-Khattab once addressed the Muslims and said: "O people, whoever wants to ask about the Quran, let him go to Zayd ibn Thabit."

And so it was that seekers of knowledge from among the companions of the Prophet and the generation who succeeded them, known as the "Tabiun", came from far and wide to benefit from his knowledge. When Zayd died, Abu Hurayrah said: "Today, the scholar of this ummah has died."

When a Muslim holds the Quran and reads it or hears it being recited, surah after surah, ayah after ayah, he should know that he owes a tremendous debt of gratitude and recognition to a truly great companion of the Prophet, Zayd ibn Thabit, for helping to preserve for all time to come the Book of Eternal Wisdom. Truly did Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, say: "Surely We have revealed the Book of Remembrance and We shall certainly preserve it." (The Quran, Surah al-Hijr, 15:9)
